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THE PASSING MOMENT
ARTHUR CHANDLER



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THE CULT OF
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THE CULT OF THE PASSING MOMENT

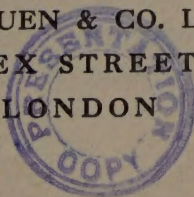
SOME SUGGESTIONS TOWARDS A THEORY
OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

BY

ARTHUR CHANDLER

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PREFACE

THE plan of this book is very simple. I begin by stating what I believe to be an essential characteristic of the spiritual life, namely, that it is a communion with God, or a waiting upon God, from one moment to another ; with the corollary that fresh and progressive indications of His will may be thus received. In the second paper, the reality of this communion with God is maintained, in opposition to a prevalent attitude assumed by modern psychology.

Further, in *The Development of Doctrine*, such communion is described as a communion of the whole personality with God ; a personality, within which the reason co-operates with the will and the affections, and must not be allowed to run riot by itself.

Then *Per Crucem* brings out the necessity of vigorous self-discipline if a communion of this kind is to exist at all ; and in *Christianity as Mystery-Cult* I deal with the sacramental system as that by which the communion is primarily cemented, and emphasize the essential importance which such a system possesses, as witnessed by the most vital cults of Greece and the East.

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The last paper gathers up these various principles, and restates the main thesis of the book in connection with them.

But there are just two points on which a word may be added. First, a good deal of criticism is directed, up and down the book, against the overblown and extravagant development of the intellect in matters of religion. Such criticism I believe to be salutary; but on the other hand I do not want in any way to discourage the use of such brains as we possess in the most important of all studies. The *co-ordination* of the intellect with the other factors of our nature is what I want to insist upon as necessary everywhere, and especially in religion.

And, secondly, I have urged throughout that, if religion is to be worth its salt, it must consist in communion with a real God and be based on a real revelation. To me, at any rate, Christian experience means an apprehension of objective truth concerning God, and I have no use for that ambiguous sort of "experience" which is so prominent in the theological writing of to-day; an experience which, whilst it may mean the apprehension of objective truth, may also mean nothing more than the speculations of the human mind. There is a great deal of juggling, no doubt unconscious, with such expressions as "religious experience," which seems to dispense those who use them from any clear statement as to the nature,

source, and object of the experience. People are thus able to talk of the "religious experience of the Biblical writers" without committing themselves as to the truth of the revelation which occasioned it; and of "the compelling fact of spiritual experience" in moulding New Testament theology, without telling us whether they consider it a true and valid experience or not. These phrases are taken from *Foundations*, a book in which equivocal expressions of this sort are quite extraordinarily common, and in which the real issues are seldom faced. The fact is, experience, as such, may be a mare's nest of subjective fancy and illusion; if it is to be more than that, its source and object must be definitely conceived and clearly stated.

February 1914.

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I

THE CULT OF THE PASSING MOMENT (*a*)

1. AS AN EXPRESSION OF COMMON SENSE, ART, AND A THEORY OF LIFE ; ITS STRONG AND WEAK POINTS.
2. AS AN EXPRESSION OF RELIGION ; ITS RESULTS IN (i.) RESTFULNESS, (ii.) HAPPINESS, (iii.) VITALITY.

I

THE CULT OF THE PASSING MOMENT

MEN have been led, at various times and for various reasons, to give exclusive attention to the impressions and feelings of the passing moment ; to find the whole meaning and reality of life in that which is seen or heard, touched or tasted, suffered or enjoyed, from moment to moment. Reality consists, then, in feeling ; and a code of conduct can aim only at securing for the individual the largest number of the most satisfactory and pleasurable feelings.

And this sensationalism may be due to different causes. Sometimes it is rooted in a distrust of reason and a despair of finding truth in any one of the many complicated systems which reason constructs. Protracted argument and disputation on these matters have only ended in a sense of weariness and disgust, a distaste for all speculation as for something futile and ineffective, incapable of satisfying or convincing anyone but its author. With a great sense of relief people have turned from these ghostly phantoms of the reason to a real world that can be seen and touched, a world which exists equally for all men, a world of clear, sharp, and definite sensation. There at last they have something true and indisputable, something that carries its own evidence with it, something that comes with an insistent message from

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without, instead of being fabricated by a diseased mind preying upon itself. This type of sensationalism may be described as a protest of common sense against philosophy.

Or, again, the same thing comes about from an artistic standpoint. All general conceptions, whether scientific or philosophical, are felt to be dull, drab, uninteresting things, since they ignore and despise just that which Art particularly prizes—the element of difference and individuality and unexpectedness in things, the lights and shades and contrasts, the subtle characterizations which make up the life and beauty of the visible world. These qualities are revealed, not by science, but in immediate perception; they are a matter of impression and feeling. Therefore the manifold world of feeling, with its warmth and colour, with its changing complexion and inexhaustible variety, the world of immediate concrete impression, is deliberately chosen by Art in preference to the cold uniformities of scientific truth.¹

Or, lastly, sensationalism may arise not as a protest against the theorisings of philosophy or science, but as an attempt to apply the lessons of philosophy or science to practical life. The scientific doctrine of the transition of all things in the universe—the doctrine that all things pass and nothing abides—is primarily the observation of a fact of nature, a truth perceived

¹ Nobody has ever preached this gospel of artistic feeling more forcibly, and more unwillingly, than Plato. As a philosopher, he gravely condemns the world of particular things because of its variety and changeableness; but, as an artist, he revels in its richness, has an unerring insight into its expressiveness and charm, loves it with the soul of a poet and a painter, and would therefore, on his own principles, have been the first to be banished from his own Perfect State.

by the dry light of the intellect ; but, like many other scientific facts, it makes its appeal to the emotions, and becomes a problem of the moral life. Historically, the school of Cyrene accepted unquestioningly this scientific dogma, which told them that there is nothing of which we can say that it is permanently ours ; which teaches that everything dies as soon as it is born, slips from us as we grasp it, changes even whilst we name it ; which reminds us that the passing moment, the immediate present, which has gone almost before it has come, is all that we have to deal with ; and they drew the conclusion that our wisdom is to extract from the immediate present that which alone it can give, namely, an immediate pulsation of enjoyment. The fleeting moment must be made to yield a fleeting, momentary pleasure.

The ethical theory which is derived from the physical fact of "flux" must indeed be a theory of hedonism and of individualism, since, in the first place, the merit of pure feeling is its pleasurable-ness : if we apply any other standard, we cease to treat it as pure feeling. And, further, feeling is relative to the individual : truth exists as that which each man feels, and in the special mode in which he feels it. But these feelings or impressions need not be gross or animalistic ; on the contrary, they may be feelings of the most refined and cultured sort, as in the case of a character like *Marius the Epicurean*.

In one or other of these ways the cult of the passing moment has been established—either, that is, as a protest against science, or as an ingenuous attempt to apply the dogmas of science to the moral life. And now we go on to ask how far the cult itself is satisfactory as a system of life ; and, further,

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whether it can be usefully combined with a system of religion.

Under the former head it is to be noticed, first, that this principle of living in and for each moment does not demand an irrational, any more than it implies a gross, attitude to life ; it does not imply that we passively register the stimulus of a feeling and automatically follow it with action. It means rather that, since the passing moment and the passing feeling are all that we have to count on, we must make the most of them. We must educate ourselves to understand the messages which come and go so quickly ; to catch the value and significance of the sound before it has died away ; to appreciate the effects of form and colour which each turn of the ever-turning kaleidoscope brings before our eyes ; to decipher the faint stamp of the feeling before it has been obliterated or obscured. And such self-culture, whilst it keeps to the sphere of feeling, is able to construct a world of rich and varied experience—an experience which, indeed, is necessarily “empirical” because it consists of particular concrete impressions, together with the anticipations and surprises which they occasion to ourselves, but an experience which is nevertheless full of inexhaustible interest and delight. And, in the second place, though these impressions of the moment pass rapidly away, they survive in a fashion as ideas in the memory. Memories, it is true, have not the full flavour nor the clear outlines of the original impressions, but nevertheless they form a link with the past and secure a certain continuity in our lives. And, lastly, this defect of blurred outline and vague reminiscence may be supplied by Art, which has for its function to seize upon some fleeting manifestation

of life, and to arrest and eternalise it as an unfading type of perfection. That "which was so fugitive" in its actual occurrence is made stationary by a wave of the wand of the artist, is stripped of irrelevant detail, and, clothed in its own ideal significance, is bequeathed to us as a permanent possession and a joy for ever. Thus art, which, as we saw above, often gives rise to the cult of the passing moment, also performs the greatest service to the cult by conferring a kind of immortality upon the most worthy or beautiful of its objects.

Such considerations undoubtedly suggest that the cult of the transitory has a good deal to say for itself, and that there is much in the grounds from which it springs to command our sympathy and respect; and we must further recognize that valuable support is given to it, in different ways, by culture and memory and Art. But, on the other hand, it does not need much reflection to see that this support is not very strong or substantial. Self-culture may enable a man to derive a more exquisite enjoyment from the things that pass before him; but then the more the moment is enjoyed the quicker it passes; and if he turns to memory for a prolongation of his pleasure, the pleasure will be at best a bitter-sweet affair, in which the element of bitterness will gradually predominate. It becomes a melancholy and even a ghoulish thing to haunt, in memory, the scenes of past delights; the memories are pleasant in their way, but the prevalent thought is that they are only memories, of which the reality has gone for ever. And if Art arrests some particularly exquisite moment in the stream of time, the arrested moment bears the stamp of artifice. The stationariness of the statue, for instance, is divined

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to be unreal. The boy in the Capitoline Museum cannot be always extracting the thorn from his foot ; the discobolus cannot be for ever balanced in that perfect poise ; they cannot always be young and strong ; they too must be passing into other phases of anxiety and failure, and age and decay. " All things pass and nothing abides " : culture and memory and art are alike powerless to soften the hard fact, or to deal with the depressing sense of the futility of things which it brings with it.

And the ultimate reason of the failure of this cult, taken in itself, is to be found, first, in the comparative, relative permanence of ourselves who experience these momentary feelings. We walk slowly along the road of time, and they race past us. In comparison with them, we have an enduring existence on earth, and require a more enduring satisfaction than they can give. And, secondly, sensationalism fails to supply any distinction of higher or lower in the feelings which we experience. It is *feeling* as such which is commended to us. Experience may discriminate between different feelings as having more or less " value " in an æsthetic sense, or again as leaving pleasant or painful memories behind them, but sensationalism has no soul ; it cannot accept moral or spiritual distinctions.

We can easily understand that these two defects must undermine sensationalism as a system of conduct ; and historically we see them at work in the Cyrenaic School. The " pleasure of the moment " (*μονόχρονος ἡδονή*), which had been preached and extolled by Aristippus, the founder of the school, was found on experience to be too transitory and elusive to support a theory of life, and was abandoned in

favour of "a life pleasant on the whole," in which "joy" takes the place of "pleasure" as the end. But how can feelings be thus systematized? Life is short and uncertain; if we reject a satisfaction which offers itself to-day in order to secure a series of fuller satisfactions to-morrow or next year or for years to come, we may after all be baulked of our desire and end in failure. It was some such consideration which made Hegesias declare that happiness (considered as a scheme of pleasurable feeling) was quite impossible. It only remained for the last professors of this school to save the situation as best they could by recognizing such ideas as "friendship" and "patriotism" as legitimate hedonistic motives. But such motives imply altruism and even self-sacrifice in the agent; they involve moral distinctions, and are, in fact, a verdict of suicide against Cyrenicism itself as an ethic of pure sensation. two

If, then, we recognize the attractiveness of the cult of the passing moment and wish it well, we must supplement it with a permanent and moral background; and such a background religion can supply. That background, in fact, is God. If that background is accepted and the cult becomes religious, it will have vanquished its difficulties whilst retaining its own intrinsic merits. Moreover, it will confer as well as receive advantages from such an alliance with religion.

For, if religion enriches the cult of the moment with a permanent background and a moral character, she receives from it an element of vivacity which she sometimes lacks, and gets rid of much dead wood of formalism and stiffness. This, indeed, can readily be recognized as a natural result of such an union; but what is less obvious is that her acceptance of the

doctrine of flux will also endow religion with a quality of restfulness and tranquillity—a quality due not directly to the sensationalism of that doctrine, but to the inter-action between sensationalism on the one hand and belief in God on the other.

(i.) We will deal first with the more unexpected fruit of the alliance. Reliance upon God is of course the source of religious restfulness: “Thou shalt keep him in perfect peace whose heart is stayed on Thee.” But under what conditions is this reliance upon God most perfectly exhibited? We answer, When God’s will is recognized in everything that happens; when every passing moment is regarded as charged with a message which comes from Him, tells us about Him, and is a bond of union between Him and us. God is permanent Being; the passing moments are the infinitely various expressions of His will; the simplicity which treats them as such is the most perfect reliance upon Him, and therefore an unfailing source of restfulness and peace. But as a rule we are not content with this simplicity of trust. Not being satisfied with God as the one solid and unchanging reality, we try to solidify also the changing expressions of His will. Because He once sent us a certain message, we regard that message as the permanent and unaltering sum of all His purposes for us. Because He once spoke in a certain accent, appropriate to the state in which we then were, we close our ears for ever to any other inflexion of His voice. But at the same time we cannot avoid seeing that that particular message, and that accent of the voice that spoke, no longer help us in our new conditions, no longer supply the key to our new perplexities. Hence comes a quality of disquiet and doubtfulness, the very opposite of that

peace and tranquillity which belong to trust in God. But these perplexities arise from the spurious solidity with which we invest the passing moment, itself a passing indication of God's will.

God abides ; He has an infinite variety of things to say to us ; the connectedness of those things lies in His infinite wisdom ; *our* wisdom is to listen to them one after the other and carry them out with loyal obedience. The man who really trusts God, waits upon Him for His orders day by day. When God says, "Come," he comes ; when God says, "Go," he goes ; when God says, "Do this," he does it. And in this simplicity of obedience he finds the acme of happiness and peace.

This quality of mind seems to be found at the present more commonly among Dissenters than among Churchpeople ; and if so, the reason probably is that our set forms of worship are apt, with all their merits, to produce a crust of conventionality in our relations with God, and simplicity and conventionality cannot dwell together. "I sticks my hands in my pockets," says the dissenting preacher in one of Q's stories, "an' waits on the Lord ; an' what He tells me to do, I do." And an instance is given when the preacher suddenly appears to help the vicar and his son, who are repairing the church. "T'other night," he explains, "the Lord said to me, 'Arise, go, and show them chaps how to do it.' 'Dear Lord,' I said, 'Thou knowest I be a Bryanite.' The Lord said to me, 'None of your back answers ! Go and do as I tell 'ee.' So here I be."

The obvious objection comes : Do you mean that a man gets the highest measure of peace and happiness by refusing to form his own plans, and weigh reasons

and propound different lines of action? If so, what is his intellect given him for? I should reply that this is very much what I do mean; and that, since there are very few who are ready so to act, it is only natural that there should be so little peace and happiness in the world to-day. And, further, I would reply that intellect is given us in order that we may understand and execute God's orders. How, then, do God's orders come? Must we wait for a special inspiration before we attempt to do anything? The answer is, that God's orders come through the things that happen from moment to moment; and that, as we grow in the power of insight which results from simplicity of heart, the divine orders speak out more clearly in these daily happenings. We shall return to this point presently; what we want to emphasize here is this, that, whether it is easy or difficult thus to wait upon God for indications of His will, there is no doubt that the result of doing so is an unruffled peace and a light-hearted happiness, such as the Cyrenaics sought for in vain. And the reason is that, in thus living for the moment, we are living in eternity; we are in constant touch with the Permanent. Other people try to ignore the momentariness of the passing moment; they try to carve the flowing stream into solid "things" which they can keep and for which they can live; like the Israelites, they try to store up the manna which is given for each day's separate needs; like the Apostles on the Mount, they try to build enduring tabernacles for fleeting manifestations of divine glory. But these "things" dissolve before their eyes, and return to the fluidity which is their natural and proper state, and their owner finds himself left desolate. God abides; everything else passes

like waves shaken down a rope. Those are the two ultimate facts. If we are foolish, we try to express ceaseless motion in terms of rest ; if we are wise, we treat each separate motion as a message from God, and find rest in Him who sends it. The message may be of the most various import. Sometimes it will be a call to endurance of ills, sometimes a call to arms in view of a wrong to be righted ; sometimes it will summon a man to a life of bustling activity, sometimes to study and research, sometimes to the sorer travail of contemplation. It depends entirely on God's will what form the command takes, and the form may very well vary from day to day. " If the divine will make reading the duty of the present moment, the reading will effect His mysterious work in the depths of the soul. If, in obedience to the divine will, we leave the reading for the duty of contemplation, this duty will create the new man in the depths of the heart, and reading would then be injurious and useless. If the divine will withdraw us from contemplation to hear confessions or to other duties, and that during a considerable time, these duties form Jesus Christ in the depths of the heart, and all the sweetness of contemplation would only serve to banish Him. The order of God is the fullness of all our moments. It flows under a thousand different appearances which, successively becoming our duty, form, increase, and complete the new man in us, in all the fullness which the divine wisdom has destined for us." ¹

And again, not only may God's command vary in substance ; it may also vary in degrees of clearness.

¹ Caussade, *Abandonment, or Absolute Surrender to Divine Providence*, p. 46 (Benziger).

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Sometimes the order is plain and unambiguous, as, *e.g.*, the order to S. Philip to go and join himself to the Ethiopian's chariot; sometimes God uses a code which must be interpreted, as in S. Peter's vision of the sheet let down from heaven. But in any case the receiving of the message, whether it be to our liking or not, and whether it be easily understood or not, means that we are in direct communication with God, from whom all these messages come. The tick-tick of each passing moment is the tick-tick of a recording instrument, through which God telegraphs to the attentive soul, and if the message is to be interpreted and acted on, the soul must be always waiting upon God; and as the soul (like the receiving clerk) grows in experience and aptitude for its work, the quicker and surer will it be in the interpretation of God's will. It will acquire a more delicate sensitiveness to His touch, a readier insight into His meaning; its ears will be opened to His voice, so that it will be able to say with great confidence, "Speak, for Thy servant heareth."

And the gaining of this sympathetic insight and intelligence will be *success*—that is, a solid and accumulating prosperity which consists in gaining firm possession of that which alone endures. Instead of trying desperately to arrest the fleeting moment ("verweile doch, du bist so schön"), and deploring the fact that all things pass and nothing abides, we shall feel that this very transitoriness of the moment has a peculiar value in pointing away to something else, something which does abide and does not pass. If each moment is thus accepted and acted on, as an indication of God's will and a means of union with God, then Eternity is present in each moment, and we are

in possession of Him in whom all fullness for ever dwells.

So, too, as old age comes on, it will not be a time of despair or of stoical resignation at the thought that only a very limited number of pulsations of thought and feeling are remaining to be experienced. On the contrary, it will be a time when we renew our youth as an eagle; when, perhaps for the first time, we become really young, because the passing moments, which were God's messengers, have brought us at last into vital union with a rock of unfailing strength, a well-spring of eternal life. It is the feeling of vigour and abundant life that makes one young. The number of the moments, the length of their series, is of no account; our health and wealth lie in that to which the moments testify. The passing moments, however many we may be able reasonably to look forward to, can themselves never yield the sense of permanent possession, since they cannot be summed up, rounded off, and stored as an accumulated treasure. One has gone for ever before the next can come; the second does not add to the first, but destroys it and takes its place, only at once to make way for another. Our permanent possession, our freehold property, is located in God, from whom the moments come and with whom they connect us. Perhaps only after many years of disappointment we thus come into possession of treasure laid up in bags that wax not old; perhaps only in old age shall we have secured this strength, this freshness, and this wealth which make up *life*, and which will not pass away.

By all means, then, let us give this cult of the transitory a place in our religion. By listening to God as He speaks "in divers portions and in divers

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manners " in the moments as they pass, we shall in the first place be seeking permanence and stability where alone they exist ; and, secondly, shall be gaining the restfulness and peace which the stable and permanent alone can yield.

Now (ii.) Now if the cult of the passing moment makes for happiness, this may explain the characteristic happiness of the Saints, for it is the Saints who have pre-eminently practised this cult ; in fact, we might go further and say, with some plausibility, that it is just the cult of the moment which has made them Saints. Sanctity has consisted in their taking each moment as it comes, with its call to prayer or suffering or action, and obeying each such single call wholeheartedly as a call from God. In other words, the Saints have regarded the moment *sub specie eternitatis* ; each moment has had for them an infinite value and an infinite significance and an infinite claim on their attention. Each has made its claim upon them in the name of God, and each particular claim has been recognized and welcomed with the enthusiastic devotion which everyone regards as due to the service of God *in general*. The Saints have differed from other Christians in that this general devotion to God's service has been translated by them into a particular devotion to the several claims which God makes in each moment as it comes. And as these particular claims upon them are mostly concerned with things which seem trivial and unimportant, it has been truly said that the Saints are the people who do ordinary things extraordinarily well. With most people love for God is either a somewhat conventional expression for the fact that they are Christians, or, so far as it is real, is restricted to great occasions when some

special benefit has been received. But the Saints have exhibited their love for God in the scrupulous thoroughness and the ardent devotion with which they have responded to the commonplace claims of each successive moment ; whether the moment's duty has been the scrubbing of a cell, or planting trees in waste places, or teaching children, or keeping accounts, or reading the Bible, or visiting their neighbours, or saying their prayers, their whole soul has been given to the work ; they have taken that full and unaffected interest in men and things which is the secret at once of good manners, happiness, and sanctity. And they have acted thus because each moment is for them an image of God's eternity ; they have felt that they see God in His image, love Him in His creatures, serve Him in particular acts of service.

(iii.) We have seen that this act of living in and for each moment is a source of peace and tranquillity, and that it has at least a good deal to do with the sanctity of the Saints. We may add, lastly, that this way of life preserves the freshness and alertness, the life and progress of the soul. "To form habits is failure," was a dictum of Pater's ; and it is as true of the spiritual as of the æsthetic life. The only habit must be the habit of waiting upon God, and listening each moment for some fresh indication of His will. Ordinary habit makes us wooden and mechanical in our work. We lumber heavily along in ruts which wear ever deeper and deeper ; there is no life or light or spontaneity about us. The conservatism of habit makes us go on repeating the same prayers year after year, long after they have ceased to represent God's message to us or our true present-day relation to God. Again, habit stereotypes the method of our medita-

tion ; or again, the relative time allotted to study and active work. What we once decided on, we feel, must be right for all time ; we must avoid inconsistency, &c. In matter of fact, what we really need is the freshness which comes of the reception of new light and leading from God ; this will save us from the mistake of living on old stores which expressed His will for us last month, or perhaps twenty years ago. And there is a terrible danger of our so doing. Thus, if we are teachers or preachers, instead of flashing out to others the fresh messages which each moment God signals to our soul, we give them the worn-out phrases which record as much as we can remember of the messages which came to us long ago ; we repeat as much as we can recall of our earliest instruction to a confirmation class or of some primeval exhortation to a mothers' meeting. And we expect the souls of others to warm themselves at dead cinders, instead of at the fire which is ever ready to descend from heaven to consume the sacrifice of ourselves ever newly offered to God.

But, it will be objected, does this mean that there is to be a complete lack of system or of continuity in our lives ? Certainly not ; but it does mean that the system and continuity are resident in God and not in ourselves. God is a God of order, and works out His purposes with unbroken continuity of action. And the fault of our stereotyped conventions is just that they thwart this steady and systematic action of God. We crystallize and arrest that which is just one moment in the flow of God's orderly and progressive revelation to our souls. For instance, it may be God's will that we shall continue for some time to do much the same things in much the same way ;

but in that case we shall know that it is so because He continually repeats His command to that effect, not because He once gave us such a command many years ago, and we have shut our ears ever since to any fresh expression of His purposes. And in the inverse case, if we alter our methods of work, it must not be just because we are tired of them and would like a change, but because God in His wisdom signifies to us that He wills this change to be made, for the better carrying out of His orderly, systematic purposes for us and others. Unless we are prepared thus to wait each moment upon God, we first fashion heavy manacles of habit for ourselves, which rob us of all freshness and freedom, and then, just as arbitrarily, break them all off in a sudden self-assertive passion of revolt. If we had listened to God's voice from day to day, we might have been spared both the manacles and the revolt, which were equally contrary to the course of orderly progress in which He would have guided us.

The plan is God's plan; and if we would understand it, so far as it is capable of being understood by us, the understanding of it will be best attained by this same habit of quietly waiting upon Him. To attain it we must just put ourselves into an attitude of passive receptivity with regard to God. If we thus place ourselves in connexion with the centre of all life, we shall at any rate see things in a truer perspective than when we are engrossed in the schemes of our own strutting intellect. We shall understand the inner affinities, the spiritual values, the aim and significance of the processes that are at work. We shall see deeper into the meaning of life, as the artist sees deeper than the ordinary man into the drift and coherence of a sunrise or a storm. "The mind that

watches and receives " at God's feet will be best able to enter into God's purposes, and to react readily and promptly to each new indication of His will ; it will neither be shackled by habit nor blinded by conceit, but, rooted and grounded in God, will meet each new occasion with the response which is in accordance with that will of God which it is getting to understand.

The cult of the passing moment, as here outlined, we believe to be an essential element in the spiritual life—in fact, to be practically identical with it. The following papers aim at developing this conception and meeting difficulties which lie in its path. In the last one we shall return directly to our theme, and restate it with the help of such reinforcements as we have gathered on the way.

II

REALITY AND PERFECTION

1. THE MENTAL FACTOR IN REALITY.
2. THE OBJECTIVE FACTOR IN PERFECTION.
 - (a) RELIGION AND PSYCHOLOGY.
 - (b) EXPERIENCE OF GOD.
 - (c) EVIDENTIAL VALUE OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE.
3. SUMMARY.

II

REALITY AND PERFECTION

IN the last paper we have urged the claims of what may be called a Christian sensationalism—the desirability, that is, of waiting upon God from moment to moment for guidance and inspiration, instead of solidifying and stereotyping such messages as we think we have received from Him in the past. We pointed out that the attitude which we recommended was a source alike of restfulness, of sanctity, and of vitality in religion. That these qualities are of supreme importance will be readily conceded; and they are, then, a strong argument in favour of a principle from which they flow.

But difficulties arise. How can we be sure of the reality of such immediate experience of God and God's will? May not the messages which we seem to receive from Him be, after all, the mere natural output of our own temperament? May not the very notions of God and God's will be just an expression of a certain psychical condition of our own? May we not be presuming on the more kind and friendly attitude which present-day psychology is adopting towards religion? The older psychology regarded the religious impulse as abnormal and hysterical; the newer psychology regards it as natural and normal. But is not this later attitude at least as hostile to the

reality of religion as the earlier one? We may be so constituted psychically as to refer our moral and spiritual impulses to a divine source. There is certainly nothing to be ashamed of in such an action, since it is quite normal and almost universal; but can it be taken as evidence for anything except the psychical constitution itself? May not the whole Godward attitude be simply a pictorial or symbolical manner in which purely natural states express themselves? Such difficulties have to be faced. We cannot merely evade them by rejecting the element of "experience" as foreign to sober-minded religion, and by basing that religion entirely on habit and authority. For, after all, habit is merely the crystallization of past experience; and even if it did not rest at all on experience, but exclusively on authority, authority itself can only command assent when it speaks of what it has seen and known—that is, when it rests on a basis of experience. The Christian religion claims to put a real experience of God within our reach. If, then, all such experience is ruled out as illusory, both the habit and the authority of religion will be undermined. In the following paper I attempt, in rather a roundabout way, to suggest an answer, or fragments of an answer, to this challenge from the side of psychology.

1

Life is in one aspect of itself a hunt for reality. As soon as we are able to think at all, we start on the quest. There is indeed a blissful time when in infancy we are content to take all things on their surface value and give them a riotous welcome without questioning

or discrimination ; when the world is a varied and sympathetic and hugely amusing spectacle ; when everything is intensely real, and part and parcel of ourselves. But this epoch comes to an end ; we discover the spuriousness of many things for whose genuineness we have stood sponsor with a light-hearted confidence ; we come to reject contemptuously as pretence and make-believe objects and actions which were once the firm realities and the solemn business of life. The quest has begun ; we have started on the pilgrimage from appearance to reality, from shadow to substance, from the surface to the centre, from the irrelevant to the significant, from the conventional to truths by which men live. And the beginning of this pilgrimage is marked by a strong reaction from our childhood's attitude towards the self. At that time the self vouched for the reality of everything it came into contact with ; but many of these things turned out to be shams and delusions, and in spurning them we come to spurn the self which accepted them with such misplaced confidence. The mind that did that stands self-condemned, when our eyes are opened, as a hostel of error, a cave of shadows, a refuge of lies. Wherever reality may be profitably sought, it is not to be sought in ourselves or in the working of a mind which has proved itself conclusively an impostor or a dupe. And some " philosophers " never get beyond this elementary cynicism of early youth. If there is a reality, it must be, they assure us, unknown and unknowable to us ; all that *we* can know is the delusive raree-show of our unsophisticated infancy.

And not only does the adult mind thus despise itself ; it despises also the ordinary surroundings in which it

finds itself, and the ordinary avocations in which it is engaged. These too are declared to be steeped in hypocrisy and guile ; salvation can only be found in a flight from the littleness, the meanness, the conventionality of social life to the primeval simplicity of nature. This is becoming, in fact, an insistent theme of present-day fiction in its more serious moods. Thus in one novel¹ we are presented by Mr. E. F. Benson with a Hermit of the New Forest, who has retired from the world, and seeks reality in communion with streams and trees and birds. He sedulously avoids anything suggestive of pain and misery ; humanity is infected with them, but he hopes that nature is immune ; and finally dies of the shock of discovering, through an apparition of the goat-god Pan, that nature is as pain-stricken as humanity. In another,² the hero, who is imbued in Fechner's philosophy, flees in a similar manner from the conventionalities of society, is gradually transformed in mind and body to the likeness of a centaur, and finds truth and peace in prancing amongst the alps of the Caucasus, where perhaps he may some day meet Prometheus, chained to a crag of the same mountains to expiate the incredible sin and folly of having tried to serve his fellow-men in the commonplace needs of life.

There is, then, a widespread tendency to push Reality as far away from ourselves as possible, to refuse to admit that it can be found in our system of knowledge, or can coexist with the trivial round of our ordinary life ; neither the man of science nor the bank-clerk can hope to attain to it. But when

¹ *The Angel of Pain*, by E. F. Benson.

² *The Centaur*, by Algernon Blackam.

we reflect, we find that if Reality is elusive, the reason is not because we are so far off from it, but because we are so inextricably mixed up with it. We have had a share in making it ; and though there are many flaws in our handiwork, we are able to amend them as we go on. We cannot know it all, but it stands to our knowledge not in the relation of truth to delusion, but in the relation of the whole to the part—the relation of the finished picture to the rough studies which are taken up and completed in it. We start with a given material of feeling, and work it up with gradually increasing accuracy into the variegated world of knowledge. The feelings come from without, but the manipulation of them is within.

It may be objected that this interaction of matter and consciousness yields just that ordinary commonplace world of experience which we feel constrained to abandon in the quest of genuine Reality, and that therefore such an analysis of it into its elements is of no use. But this analysis does at any rate make it clear that any conceivable system of truth involves our own mind as one of its factors ; that we cannot escape from the operation of the mind even whilst we are disparaging it ; that the most "simple life" of communion with nature is an ideal of the mind, and is carried out by the forces of the mind. Reality is *our* reality ; in proportion as we push it away from ourselves we are making it less and not more real. We are robbing it of all solidity of structure and of all definiteness of outline ; we are reducing it to a mere succession of waves, eddies, or vibrations of a force which has lost all its meaning when it has ceased to be interpreted by the mind. An analysis, then, of Reality into its elements only makes explicit the fact

that one of those elements, and a quite indispensable one, is the mind itself.

A more promising method of searching for the inner core of Reality, for *la vraie vérité*, for that which has essential meaning and value, as distinguished from the superficial, the irrelevant, and the worthless, is the method of reflection or intuition. According to this method, we do not attempt to rule out the mental factor in knowledge and confine Reality to the material factor; we are content to take the world as implying the two factors equally, and to seek its inner essential truth *within* the cosmos of experience. Our quest now becomes a quest for an underlying unity, a pervasive harmony, a guiding principle, a goal or object; something that can elicit meaning and discover value in a world which appears to be unintelligible, mean, and delusive. And directly we set to work on this method—a method of interpretation—Reality becomes increasingly spiritual. The spiritual can interpret and appreciate and allocate the material, whilst the material has no place or context within itself for the spiritual, but can only laugh at it and deny it. The meaning of the process can only be found in the end; the meaning of the whole can only consist in that which can unify the parts. To Bergson, who inherited the conquests of modern science, this meaning is found in the rhythm or melody of life as it streams onwards to fuller and completer truth in a river of “creative evolution”; and the apprehension of this meaning takes place in a sympathetic intuition which places us inside the process of development—an intuition which is variously¹ described as a deepened

¹ In *La Perception du Changement* and *L'Evolution Créatrice* respectively.

perception or a self-conscious instinct. To the Platonist, on the other hand, the meaning of Reality is found in the contemplation of eternal ideas which are focussed upon particular objects, and which impart truth, unity, and beauty to them, whilst remaining independent themselves of generation, change, and decay. These two conceptions of value seem at first sight hopelessly contradictory; the one conceives reality in a dynamic, the other in a static, sense; the one lays the whole stress on change, the other on stability; the one presents a time-process, the other a spacial co-ordination; the one claims to interpret this world, the other flies to a supra-mundane sphere. And yet their agreement is far deeper than their difference. Both agree in insisting upon the inner significance and the spiritual value of reality. Whether this meaning and value is discovered *in* things by a sort of artistic intuition, or is seen descending upon them from above, is a matter of comparatively small importance. The artist's intuition may equally well be called a divine "inspiration," and Plato's idea is recognized *in* the particular object on which it is focussed, and identified with that object. By the modern thinker the Vision of Reality will naturally be described as a Law of Development, whilst to the ancient philosopher it will be an Object of Contemplation; but to both it is complete and self-sufficient. Bergson repudiates an ulterior end of evolution just as emphatically as Plato repudiates an ulterior development of the ideas.

These will suffice as instances of an inner or essential Reality sought by a process of reflection or contemplation upon the outer rough-and-tumble Reality which is the ordinary world of our experience. And

it is important for our present purpose to notice that the grasp of this inner Reality, of essential, central, significant, self-existent truth, is so far from being independent of the mind that it involves a double operation of the mind, first, in constructing the world of experience, and secondly in reflecting upon it or interpreting it, and thereby disengaging the kernel from the husk. And the net result may be stated thus: the world of reality requires our own action as one of its factors; the deeper we penetrate into it, the more prominent does our action become; but no one mind can grasp it, either in the tangle of its details or in the unity of its underlying purpose; it immeasurably transcends us and our individual achievement, and ultimately points away towards a creative spirit, conceive it as we will, as the source alike of our own minds and of the "matter" on which they work.

2

But it will follow from what has been said that the search for Reality is more than a search for truth. Since we are so intimately concerned in it and bound up with it, since it is the outcome of our best and deepest thought, our ideal of Reality is also an ideal of our own nature. What we want is not only the truth of things but the perfection of ourselves. Truth, as we have so far considered it, is an abstraction of Reality—that is, it is one aspect or element of it. A complete Reality requires not merely a finished system of knowledge, but also a consummated perfection of the spiritual nature, which is concerned, indeed, in the pursuit of truth, but which has other interests besides. In fact, it is the latter aspect which

we most commonly have in view when we start in pursuit of Reality. What drives us on is dissatisfaction with the unsatisfactory conventionality of our lives rather than dissatisfaction with the delusiveness of things. The pursuit of Reality, then, is a pursuit of Perfection, in which knowledge is an element, but not the sole or even the most important element. This fact is suggested by that very process of reflection or contemplation which we recognized above as the method by which we penetrate furthest into the essence of Reality. For, whilst contemplation is a process of the mind, it is spiritual rather than purely intellectual; it aims not at mere knowledge, but at an apprehension of Reality which shall gather up and encompass and satisfy our whole nature, give us something in which we can rest, and by which we can be guided and fed in every department of our life.

(a) If we contrast the term "Reality" with "Perfection," we find, first, that in the former the material factor is specially emphasized, so much so that there is a temptation, as we have seen, to ignore any other factor's existence, whilst Perfection lays particular stress on the contribution made by our own mental or spiritual nature, and its needs and aspirations; and, secondly, Reality is naturally conceived as something which, on the material plane, immeasurably transcends ourselves, who are a tiny portion of it. And it is no less true that, on the spiritual plane, Perfection transcends a Reality which is an exclusive creation of the intellect—transcends it by including much else besides.

Reality transcends Perfection in area; Perfection transcends Reality in elevation. But just as we are tempted in the case of Reality to deny the spiritual

factor and confine ourselves to the material, so in the case of Perfection we are tempted to confine ourselves to the inward and spiritual and neglect or deny any outward or objective constituent. And to yield to this temptation is to take a defective and therefore false view of the meaning of Perfection.

Perfection is the full development of the highest endowment of man—that is, his spiritual endowment—and, rightly understood, full spiritual development means the union of the spiritual endowment of man with a Divine Spirit beyond and above him.

But here again there is nowadays a great temptation to set aside this union of the spirit of man with the Divine Spirit, and to make Perfection a process in which the human spirit resembles a squirrel running round and round its cage and never able to get beyond it; or, again, a process in which the mind preys upon itself, instead of drawing life and nourishment from something beyond. The moments in which the human spirit appears to have attained a conscious union with God, as the source and substance of spiritual Reality, are “explained” by up-to-date psychology as merely subjective experiences of a certain temperament or psycho-physical constitution, testifying to nothing beyond themselves. We have here, in fact, the crucial problem with which religion, in its higher aspirations, is faced to-day. Have the great masters of the spiritual life really attained to a union to One beyond and above, though at the same time within, themselves? or is it the case that the whole process is an inward working of psychical powers, and is the aspirant not really rising above himself to God, but merely revolving on his own axis? Modern psychology suggests very clearly that the latter is the case. And

we must acknowledge at once with gratitude that the suggestion is made, as a rule, in a polite and reverent fashion. Contemporary science, including psychology, has quite abandoned the contemptuous attitude which in later Victorian days it used to assume towards religion. It has come to regard religious experience with sympathy and appreciation as an interesting phenomenon well worthy of scientific notice. Our religious principles are no longer in danger of being laughed out of court as irrational superstitions; on the contrary, they are accepted and insisted upon as universally prevalent phenomena of the human mind. We are courteously invited to recognize our Christian rites as substantially identical with those of the Pagan mysteries, whilst even the ecstatic experiences of great Christian mystics are sympathetically studied, and classed with similar occurrences in Indian and Persian devotions. All such rites, we are assured, are reasonable, as representing a natural and innate instinct of the race; and all such experiences are in a sense true, as being the appropriate expression of individual temperaments of a certain type. That this latter is the current attitude of psychology to religion to-day is indisputable; and it is equally obvious that to a Christian there is something peculiarly baffling and irritating in such an attitude, by which our dearest principles seem to be justified and approved, whilst we feel that at the same time by a curious sublimating process they are being drained of all that endears them to us.

This treatment of religious experience takes different forms.

(1) In its crudest expression it regards all such experience as a purely subjective output of an intro-

spective, high-strung temperament, whilst the more vivid and definite of such experiences are pigeon-holed as pathological and treated as a subsection of the phenomena of hysteria.

(2) A slightly higher validity is accorded to them when it is conceded that they express "a sense of the Infinite," or that they are a kind of "cosmic emotion" experienced by thinkers who, in contemplation, have pared away all the variety and substantiality of the world, and who fix their minds on the abstract residuum of blank undifferentiated Being. Such an emotion, we are reminded, cannot maintain itself for long as a bare abstraction, and will naturally drape itself in the clothes of any dogmatic system which the contemplator may happen to believe in. In Plotinus it preserved the highest degree of abstraction, but even he was compelled to bring it into relation with the varied forms of Polytheistic paganism; and in other people, who are less metaphysical, it will frankly and naïvely reveal itself as a vision of the Holy Trinity, Christ on the Cross, the Immaculate Conception, or whatever may be the most prominent object of their particular cult, the object on which the seer's mind is most usually dwelling.

(3) The utmost that can be said for them is that, when they are attended by beneficial results, and have a bracing and elevating influence on the character of the recipient, they are true *for him*, though not evidential for anybody else. They are in a sense true, in so far as they do good, and for the man to whom they do good. This unabashed pragmatism gives the most favourable verdict that can be hoped for.

The general position, then, of Psychology is, that those aspirations and attainments which mark the

quest of Perfection either have no objective Reality corresponding to them, or a Reality which possesses only the formal quality of being infinite and transcendent, or, again, the practical merit of edification. This is indeed Idealism *in excelsis*. It regards the highest form of Reality as existing nowhere but in the mind, and this corresponds, at the opposite pole, to the materialism which, as we saw, regards Reality as existing anywhere except in the mind.

In opposition to that materialism which disparages the mind in the interests of the outside world, we argued that the mind is a necessary factor in the existence of that world, and that apart from the mind there is no permanence or solidity, or anything else that we ordinarily mean when we talk of "reality" or "fact." And now, in opposition to an idealism which, in the supposed interest of the mind and its subjective operations denies any real outside object to our spiritual aspirations, we must maintain that, apart from such a real object, the whole spiritual endowment of man is, quite unnecessarily, being rejected as a baseless dream, if not a delirious nightmare.

And if it is said that idealism need not necessarily regard knowledge as a nightmare, but can claim objective validity for it, the answer is obvious. The idealism which is given as an explanation of mystic experiences is a *subjective* idealism; it treats these experiences as the private property—or, in other words, hallucination—of particular minds. In fact, if one more slang term may be introduced, the theory which explains them is a theory of *solipsism*, i.e. a theory that each man's private ideas constitute a private world of his own beyond which he cannot, and ought not to try to, pass.

We sincerely hope that Baron von Hügel is right when he says "it is plain that Subjectivism has had its day for a good long while to come." "Certainly," he adds, "nothing can well be more arid, more drearily reiterative and useless, in face of the entrancing richness and the tragic reality of life, than is most of the still copious literature, not seldom proceeding from thinkers of distinction and technical competence, which attempts to find or to make a world worthy of man's deepest, ever costly and difficult, requirements and ideals, within avowedly mere projections of himself. We have then everywhere man's wants and man's illusions—illusions which, at their best, are of a tribal or even racial range and utility, but which, one and all, convey no trustworthy intimation of any trans-subjective, more than merely human, validity and reality whatsoever."¹

Now, in all these attitudes which, as we have seen, psychology takes up in regard to religion we find one and the same assumption. It is either explicitly claimed or tacitly assumed that religious experience falls wholly within the domain of psychology; that theology, being concerned with ideas of a sort, is a subordinate branch of psychology as the science of ideas; or, again, that being occupied with a particular class of behaviour it is subsumed under psychology as the science of behaviour; and in either case must accept humbly and gratefully whatever ruling psychology is pleased to give on the character and value of its beliefs. But such a claim is as false as it is arrogant. The fact is that theology is neither more nor less a branch of psychology than the physical sciences are branches of physiology. Physiology deals

¹ *Eternal Life*, p. 12.

with certain elementary conditions under which we get into touch with the outside world ; but it does not follow that zoology, astronomy, or geology regard themselves as branches of physiology, or could reasonably be expected to do so. In the same way psychology deals with states of consciousness, investigates the psycho-physical processes which constitute them, discriminates the cognitive, affective, and conative aspects which they exhibit, explains their motor tendencies and their methods of association and reproduction, &c. And this investigation into states of consciousness may be regarded as an introduction to science in general, since all science employs them, and more particularly as an introduction to the humaner sciences, such as epistemology, ethics, history, and theology ; but there is no reason for regarding such sciences as branches of psychology. Psychology tells them how they come to have any ideas to manipulate ; but in their manipulation of these ideas, in their judgments and inferences based on them, and in the system which they erect upon such judgments and inferences, they are guided by their own canons of credibility and of criticism.

Thus psychology can inform the ethical philosopher that instincts and emotions are the primary stuff out of which all theories of conduct are fashioned, and thereby can warn him off false paths of theory ; but the proportion in which these materials are to be compounded, and the nature of the final ideal which they are to subserve, is an ethical and not a psychological inquiry. So, too, psychology can resolve the "religious feeling" into a mixture of admiration and reverence and awe, and can further analyse these complex emotions into their simpler elements ; it

can also show us how a number of these emotions can "crystallize" into such a "sentiment" as the love of God¹; but whether these emotions are legitimately excited by the idea of God, whether, in fact, there is a God to be loved,—is a question which cannot be answered affirmatively or negatively by psychology, but must be dealt with by theology with such assistance as she can get from history and philosophy. And some psychologists have recognized this. "Psychology neither rejects nor affirms the transcendent existence of the religious object; it simply ignores that problem as being outside of its field" (Professor Flournoy). "The religious feeling is a fact which psychology simply analyses and follows in its transformations, but it is incompetent in the matter of its objective value" (Ribot). And this is equally true whatever shape our ideas about God may take, whether we regard Him as "Absolute, Infinite, Impersonal," or as "manifested directly to human consciousness, and revealed in inner experience." It is quite illegitimate to attempt (as Professor Leuba,² from whom I have taken the above quotations, attempts) to separate the two cases, and to argue that in the latter of them psychology is the final judge of truth and falsity. It has no more right to pose as a judge of "empirical" theology (theology of inner experience) than it has in the case of history, sociology, or politics, which are at least as empirical in the ideas with which they deal. Psychology has its peculiar subject matter in investigating the formation and composition of ideas, feelings, instincts, emotions, not in determining their truth or falsity;

¹ See M'Dougall, *Social Psychology*, passim.

² *A Psychological Study of Religion*, p. 245.

it deals with origins, not with validity, and this is emphatically a case where the inquiry into origins is quite distinct from an inquiry into validity. The validity, or truth, of our ideas about God depends on their ability to satisfy a quite different set of conditions. We have to ask (1) whether they rest on a basis of historical fact; (2) whether they unify and consolidate the whole system of our experience; (3) whether they solve certain problems of existence which would otherwise remain insoluble; (4) whether the "inward experience" of God has the qualities of effectiveness (being at once "word and work"), clearness, steadiness, and consistency which distinguish objective fact alike from fancy and hallucination. As to the last condition, psychologists may be capable of formulating the qualities which make for truth; but S. Theresa is a better judge than Professor Leuba of their presence or absence on particular occasions. No one can read S. Theresa's characterization of her experiences¹ without recognizing the sure judgment of an expert who is speaking of what she has seen and known, and who has a very keen eye for illusion and self-deception.

(b) It is, of course, perfectly true that religious experiences can only very imperfectly be expressed or communicated to other people. Any such expression is bound to be symbolic, and is often given in such terms as light and darkness, touch, movement, warmth, &c.—terms which, in the first place, are obviously inaccurate and even paradoxical in their application to spiritual perception; and, secondly, convey no information as to the spiritual world, but merely testify to the occurrence of a feeling. The

¹ e.g. in chapters xxv.-xxx. of her autobiography.

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reality thus enunciated with stammering lips is strictly ineffable; it is not a clear-cut "thing" with definite outlines, such as the intellect is competent to deal with; it is the sovereign Good, apprehended as the sovereign satisfaction of the whole man, especially of man considered in his highest, that is, his spiritual, endowment.

But whilst it is quite true that the mystic cannot describe his experiences to another, but can only tell him "to come and see for himself," on the other hand the one thing he is quite sure of is that in these experiences he is in touch with something other than himself. If he is sure of this in the case of the trees and stones of the material world, he is far more sure of it in the case of God; in fact, he might be ready to regard the material world as a dream, and God as the one reality by which he is lifted up out of himself.¹ The very term "ecstasy," however contemptuously we may use it, testifies to this; and, by a curious fate, Benjamin has often been taken as a type of the highest contemplative vision, just because the Vulgate rendering of a verse in the Psalms has made him subject to such ecstasy.² So far from his experiences being the creation of the mystic's own, probably disordered, mind, he is quite certain that his mind is merely the passive recipient of something which comes from above, however incapable he may be of explaining its nature to anybody else. And if it is objected that such a conviction is merely a sign

¹ "Everything seems a dream, and what I see with the bodily eyes are illusions. What I have seen with the eyes of the soul is that which my soul desires; and as it finds itself far away from those things, that is death."—S. Theresa, *Autobiography*, p. 357.

² "Ibi Benjamin adolescentulus, in mentis excessu"; in our rendering, "There is little Benjamin their ruler."—Psalm lxxviii, 28.

of mental aberration, we can only answer that the mystics are not fools, but, from S. Paul downwards, a remarkably sane and even business-like set of people. They only go a step further in a direction which most people profess to be following. Most people have views on morality and religion; the mystic says that he is in touch with the source of both.

But it may fairly be asked, What do you really mean by an experience of God? How can He produce a feeling of His presence? And, in particular, how can He communicate particular messages to His worshippers? Real messages that come through sight or hearing must have their counterpart in certain psycho-physical affections of the nervous system, originating in the stimulus of the end-organs of sensory nerves by some external cause. If the message is purely spiritual, how can it be accompanied by these neural affections which are necessary for the experience of a vision or a voice?

Now we will grant at the outset that, if God is to be experienced by man, we must assume the existence of both—that is, there must be granted to exist a spiritual Being who communicates Himself, and a spiritual creature, an human soul or “ego,” which receives the communication. “Speak to Him thou, for He hears, and spirit with spirit can meet.” Unless this initial assumption is made, *cadit quæstio*; there is only an illusion to be explained away. But if this assumption is granted, we may go on to suggest that there are different modes in which a communication can be made by God to man.

(1) In the first case, contact with the Divine Spirit can attract the human “ego” towards God, so that

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it will aspire to Him and make Him its goal in all the three aspects of conscious life, cognitive and affective and conative; or, in more familiar language, in mind and heart and will the man's nature will be turned to God, and strengthened to find Him. Such an operation of God on the soul is known as "grace." It does not involve any special revelation of His presence or of His will; it consists merely in the strengthening of the "ego" and its attraction to its Maker.

(2) A second mode of communication is that in which there is a definite awareness of the Divine Presence—an awareness which may spread to the whole of the conscious life, or (more usually) be confined to one or more aspects of that life. Sometimes, for instance, this awareness of God's presence may be experienced by the will, which reposes blissfully in the Divine strength, whilst the affections and intellect are occupied in their ordinary life. This is called the Prayer of Quiet. Or, again, this experience may affect the whole conscious life (of mind and affection and will), diverting it to God, and often rendering it unaware of its earthly surroundings. This is known as the Prayer of Union. In these methods of communication the Divine Spirit not only attracts the human "ego" towards Itself, but also more or less completely engrosses its attention, in such a way that messages from the material world fall back into the margin of consciousness, whilst God remains in the centre. We are all familiar with cases where a particular object absorbs or monopolizes our whole attention, so that we are blind and deaf to what is going on around us. In this case the object is God. Now, this communication differs

from "grace" in being not the feeling of an influence, but the awareness of a *presence*. It agrees with grace in its *generality*—i.e. it is concerned just with the presence of God, not with any detailed or particular message or revelation or command. It is not radically different from grace; it is rather an intenser and stronger operation of a power which, working at a lower intensity, appears as grace. Grace is the personal influence of God; this is the personal presence of Him from whom the influence flows. This experience, also, is purely spiritual; it affects the "ego" itself which lies behind all psycho-physical processes. It will only affect the nervous system in so far as the concentration of attention on our object involves a concentration of nervous energy in certain areas of the cortex of the brain, and the draining off of energy from other systems, which are thereby inhibited.

(3) Thirdly, God may communicate special revelations of His nature or of His will by visions and locutions. Such visions or locutions may be (a) imaginary, by which term is meant that they are apprehended like ordinary sights or sounds, except that the perception is due to no stimulus from outside; it is an "image," not a "sensation." In such cases there is a distinct psycho-physical process; the visual or auditory area of the cortex is stimulated, not, however, by an impulse travelling from an end-organ along a sensory nerve tract, as in the case of a sensation, but by an impulse originating in the cortex and impinging on the middle part of the sensory-motor arc. The result of such an impulse is usually a mere memory-image, but occasionally the image has the quality of vividness which is the characteristic

of a sensation, and at such times a vision is seen and a locution is heard in an experience to which the term "clairvoyance" and "clairaudience," or hallucination,¹ are sometimes applied.

When such experiences are accepted (through fulfilling the conditions suggested above²) as a divine message, we shall hold that the contact between God and the soul stimulates the cortex of the brain to the production of the resulting perception, which has all the vividness of a sensation of sight or sound. If the spontaneous action of the "ego" can elicit memory-images of visions and voices, the action of God in the "ego" may well produce an experience of visions and voices which, though spiritual in its origin, will be sensationalistic in its vivid reality.

Or (b) these special communications may be *intellectual*, where there is nothing that can strictly be called perception, but rather a forcible and authoritative stamping of some truth upon the mind, or, in a word, a *revelation* of a truth. Such communication involves a contact of God with the human soul; its psychical accompaniment will be a stimulus of the association areas of the brain, and the resulting "idea" will differ from ordinary ideas in the qualities of strength, operativeness, and persistence, combined with an elevating and tranquillizing power, which mark it as of divine origin.

¹ An *hallucination* is not the same as an *illusion*; it is simply ■ presentation which has the vividness of a sensation, but which is caused by no sensory impulse from the periphery. Its physiological process "must, of course, consist of an excitement from within of those centres which are active in normal perception, identical in kind and degree with that which real external objects are usually needed to induce."—James, *Principles of Psychology*, vol. ii. p. 122.

■ See pp. 39-40 above.

In some such way,¹ I think, we can conceive the possibility of an experience of God—an experience which will work in with, and complete, the whole body of our convictions and beliefs. And such experience will become more credible if we reflect that it does not imply contact between two quite heterogeneous things. We must not think of God and human nature as separated for ever by a great gulf which can only be bridged by a special miracle. God has been working in the whole course of evolution. When mind, for instance, comes into existence, it does not appear as a sheer novelty, unrelated to anything that has gone before ; rather, it has “grown up on the top of an immense previous acquisition of instincts, habits, and automatic arrangements,” ■ which have awoken to a consciousness of themselves in mind. “The absolute must under certain conditions appear as a soul with capacity for forming a self, because the stuff and pressure for utterance are there, to which nothing less than a soul can do justice.”³ And in the same way, when God communicates Himself to mind, He does not come as an intruder from an alien world. He comes as the crown and consummation of a vast process of ethical, social, and intellectual striving ; He is revealed as One whom that whole process of striving has unconsciously pursued, One in whom that process has awoken to a full knowledge of its own significance. He is only completing His own previous work, which stretches throughout a system that is continuous from begin-

¹ In the above summary I have closely followed S. Theresa, who remains our greatest authority on the Psychology of Religion for the simple reason that she possesses both religion and psychology.

² Bosanquet, *Value and Destiny of the Individual*, p. 82.

■ Ibid, *Principle of Individuality and Value*, §p. 191.

ning to end. Every tremor of the nervous system, and every aspiration after the good, have been, each in its own stage, a work and manifestation of God ; and now, in the experience of which we are speaking, He comes to dwell Himself in the house which He has made.

(c) But, assuming the reality of such experience, what evidential value does it possess ? We have seen that it is, strictly speaking, ineffable, that any expression given to it is necessarily symbolic, and that the symbolism naturally adapts itself to the moulds of the seer's intellectual creed. And so, if such experience is claimed as first-hand evidence for Christian beliefs, it can equally well be claimed as such for the doctrines of the Mohammedan, Buddhist, or Zoroastrian faiths. But it is impossible that the particular dogmas of all these religions should be equally true, and a religious experience which expresses itself impartially in such a variety of intellectual forms would seem to be thereby ruled out of court as evidence for any one of the faiths concerned. We have here a real difficulty. It seems to me that the best way of meeting it is to consider further the relation between the two factors just mentioned—the religious experience on the one hand, and the rational manipulation of it on the other ; in other words, the relation between the spiritual *intuition* and the *intellect*.

Now (a) one possible view (associated with the name of Bergson) will be that the *intellect*, whilst admirably adapted for the investigation of scientific truth, especially in the sphere of the inorganic, is too hopelessly materialistic and utilitarian in its operations to do anything but distort and obscure

that which belongs to the sphere of the spiritual. In that case extra-intellectual experience, or intuition, will be our sole guide to everything in that sphere; our knowledge of it will be confined to the fitful gleams of "a light almost extinguished" of intuitional experience, and, as soon as we attempt to give a rational expression to this experience, such expression will necessarily and at once adulterate, distort, and falsify the matter of the experience itself. It will follow, on this theory, that men of different creeds may all have contact with spiritual reality, but that the accounts they give of it will be equally untrustworthy and worthless.

Or (b) we may hold the opposite view, and maintain that the intellect is, on the contrary, our only guide and our quite sufficient guide in all matters of religion; that religion is solely a matter of historical facts and ethical principles, and that any so-called spiritual experience is the merest moonshine, unworthy of serious consideration. This, which may be called the intellectual or deistic view, settles the relations between intellect and intuition by simply erasing the latter.

Or (c) we may believe that the intellect has a valid and important, but limited, sphere of operation in the sphere of the spiritual; that it is not only capable of estimating and comparing the historical foundations and the moral and rational credentials of various religions, but is also able to translate spiritual experience into a language which shall roughly and approximately express its meaning. But the very fact of a translation being required points to the fact of that experience being directly apprehended by a capacity of spiritual intuition which will supply the

intellect with the data which it interprets. And this third view seems the most satisfactory. It maintains the unity of the human mind ; it posits no yawning gulf between intellect and intuition (which appears as a main defect or difficulty in Bergson's system), but regards the intellectual and the intuitional modes of apprehension as complementary capacities of a single mind ; it supplies the intellect with the grist of spiritual experience to be ground into a rational creed, and thereby provides it with employment, since a creed exists only to register spiritual experience, together with the historical facts on which such experience is grounded ; and, lastly, it enables us to differentiate between the credibility of various religions, and therefore between the value of the expressions which they respectively give to their experience of the infinite. Thus, if the intellect, in comparing the credentials of various religions, decides in favour of the truth of one of them, then the spiritual experience expressed in terms of the true religion will itself have a real and objective value. For instance, if the Christian religion is pronounced by the intellect to be true, on the grounds just indicated, the spiritual experiences of a S. Theresa or of an anchoress Julian will be in a real sense valid ; they will express not the fantasies of a mind feeding on its own vitals, nor a mere testimony to the existence of an infinite of which, in the conflict of witnesses, nothing can be said, but actual and trustworthy information about, and actual messages from, the spiritual Being who is the object of the Christian faith. We shall, of course, be prepared to give full recognition to the inadequacy of the intellect's report of spiritual experience, and to the element of alloy which, like the

shells and weeds clinging to the sea-god Glaucus, attach to such experience in its passage through a particular mind; all inspiration is in a manner subject to such adulteration; but we shall be entitled to hold that, after making all needful allowances and corrections, a true religion is receiving additional confirmation and additional illumination from these spiritual experiences.

I have taken the great mystics as representatives of "spiritual experience" in its clearest and most exalted form; but what holds good of them will also hold good of that immediate spiritual guidance from moment to moment (spoken of in the last paper) which we ordinary people can look for in proportion as we have humble and receptive minds.

But the relation between intellect and intuition is yet more intimate. I have spoken above of the intellect as establishing the truth of a religion, and thereby establishing the validity of a spiritual experience which is expressed in the terms of the intellect's creed. And this is a true relation. But it must be added that the spiritual experience has a share, along with the intellect, in the shaping of the creed; and in this fact we have an additional indication of the reality of such experience. Although, then, spiritual experience naturally takes the mould of our accepted creed, yet it can undoubtedly modify and even revolutionize our convictions, in degrees that vary according to the sensitiveness and receptivity of those to whom the experience comes. A religious genius is a man (or more generally a woman) who is peculiarly sensitive and receptive in such matters, whilst the conventional religionist is a person who has little capacity for apprehending such messages at all, and who, if

they do come, will force them into rigid conformity with the formulas which he has accepted, and the spiritual significance of which he has probably never felt.

I have dealt (in *Faith and Experience*) with the influence which experience can have upon faith, and will here merely give a few typical instances. The modification of current beliefs under spiritual influence is exhibited in the contrast between S. John's doctrine on "judgment" and "eternal life" on the one hand, and the strongly established eschatology of the primitive Church on the other. That which was to others an expectation of a future, though an imminently future event, became for him a present fact. So, too, the contemplation of S. Catherine of Genoa modified enormously for her, and through her for subsequent generations, the popular belief in the character of Purgatory. And whilst these are changes *within* the sphere of a particular creed, we have in S. Paul's conversion a spiritual experience which acted as an earthquake in upsetting the main fabric of belief and clearing the ground for the erection of a fresh structure.

Spiritual experience, then, is contact with a spiritual reality which transcends the human spirit; and the contact not merely confirms the creed of the person who experiences it, when that creed has been approved by the intellect, but is capable of correcting and seriously altering certain conventionally accepted items of that creed.

3

To sum up : man's perfection consists in the relation of correspondence or union in which he stands to the Sovereign Spirit. His pursuit of perfection is essentially a pursuit of something above and beyond himself. It cannot be reduced to a desire to improve and cultivate himself ; self-culture, self-improvement, are spurned by him as something narrow, priggish, and unsatisfying. "Set me up on the rock that is higher than I," is his prayer ; if there is no such rock, his quest will have ended in failure, though it will be a noble failure, more satisfactory than success in anything else. But we have seen reason to suppose that there is an Object in whom these spiritual aspirations find a spiritual satisfaction ; that, just as in our ordinary knowledge of reality there is a message that comes from without and a reason that interprets it, so in the case of spiritual experience there is likewise a message that comes, a spiritual discernment that is aware of it, and a reason that interprets it in accordance with the general lines of its existing beliefs—beliefs, however, which are capable of being affected and altered by the force and insistence with which the message comes.

It may be suggested in conclusion that the dualism of a message that comes and a mind that receives and interprets can be reduced if we hold that the message comes from the same God who has created the mind that receives it. It is natural to suppose this in the case of spiritual experience ; God is the source of the message, and only God could have

created the instrument which interprets it. But may not the same be the case with the data of sense which the mind works up into our experience of the reality of the natural world? If so, in the latter case sensation is God's message stimulating us to the knowledge of the world of nature, just as inspiration is the message stimulating us to the knowledge of the world of spirit. The material universe will thus be linked to the spiritual, and He will be the common source of both. Reality and Perfection will have their common origin in God.

III

THE DEVELOPMENT OF DOCTRINE

1. THEORIES OF DEVELOPMENT.

(a) ANALYSIS.

(b) GENETIC GROWTH ; THE ORGANISM THEORY.

(c) EMPIRICAL SCIENCE.

2. RESULTS OF DEVELOPMENT THEORIES.

3. " WHAT IS TRUTH ? "

III

THE DEVELOPMENT OF DOCTRINE

WE have considered the grounds for believing that in spiritual experience we are really in touch with God. We have also considered the relation in which such experience stands to the intellect that interprets it. The main service that an intellectual creed renders to religion is, that it registers spiritual experience and states the historical basis on which it rests. But we are apt to exaggerate enormously the sphere of the distinctively rational side of religion. We insist on an answer being supplied to every question which a restless and curious mind may choose to propound; consequently the development of doctrine becomes something rank and unwholesome, and pursues its own course independently of the development of love and service, by which it ought to be accompanied, aided, and disciplined. This danger, together with some suggestions for meeting it, is the subject of the following essay.

1

That the Church has apostolical authority and the guidance of the Holy Spirit for the determination of truth would be held in common by Anglicans and Romans. The peculiarity of the Roman view is that the whole body of doctrine, formally accepted at any

time by Rome, is both (a) infallibly true, and (b) identical in substance with the faith taught by Christ and the Apostles. The second position would seem to follow naturally from the first, and, indeed, to be demanded as a safeguard, by those who accept it. If a doctrine is to be imposed with infallible authority upon the faithful, they must have an assurance that it is fairly included in the faith once delivered to the Saints. How, then, are these propositions maintained and defended?

(a) The simplest method is what may be called the *analytic* method, by which (on the analogy of the psychology of the individual) it is argued that whatever is now accepted as of faith by the present-day consciousness of the Church was actually present, though in a latent or implicit form, in its earliest consciousness. The Holy Spirit has so guided the Church that her authoritative statements have always been true and have never exceeded the original *depositum*.

It follows that, on this method, we must either limit that which is "of faith" at present to that which can, on a natural view, be recognized in the past; or, if we insist on the whole present-day position of the Roman Church (sacramental, doctrinal, and institutional) having been there from the beginning, we must take a forced and unnatural view of the "implicit" faith of the first century. And it is obviously the second alternative which a Roman Catholic is compelled to adopt. When any new doctrine is defined, it becomes authoritatively binding, and *ipso facto* is read backwards and included as a fresh item in the original faith. Thus Newman, in writing to Pusey on the doctrine of Papal Infallibility, shortly before the Vatican Council which

imposed it, says, "For myself, I think that the Church *may* define it (*i.e.* it possibly may turn out to belong to the original *depositum*), but that she will not ever define it"¹—that is, he does not think the definition will be made, but if it is, it will "turn out" to be part of the original belief of Christendom.

The inherent difficulties, emphasized by Biblical and historical criticism, have now made it practically impossible to maintain this theory. The implicit faith of the primitive Church cannot be stretched sufficiently wide to include the whole dogmatic position of twentieth-century Rome, and a restatement was imperatively needed.

(b) On the method of *genetic* psychology we may recognize a real growth, in the course of which actually new elements are developed in the Church's consciousness. The original deposit now appears as a fruitful germ issuing in a manifold and luxuriant growth, which may indeed be described as having been latent in that germ, but only in the sense that it has in fact issued from it. The later stages cannot be detected in the earlier, and we need not attempt to discover them there; we merely state the historical fact that by a process of functional growth *this* adult consciousness, and no other, has actually been brought into existence.

It is obvious that in this second theory it is no longer contended that the Church has always been of the same mind. The whole emphasis is laid on the *unity of life*. The conscious life of the organism has in fact grown in this particular way, and we can assume that this is the normal method of growth—in fact, the only way in which it *could* have grown.

¹ Ward's *Life of Cardinal Newman*, ii. p. 221.

Now the important thing to be noticed on this theory is that a description of the Church which is often used in a popular and metaphorical sense is here being deliberately taken up and pressed into the source of apologetic—*i.e.* the description of the Church as a person, an individual life, an organism. This idea was probably implied to a certain extent in the earlier theory which we have just considered; the notion that all present-day beliefs could be discovered in primitive times was helped out by the theory (now exploded) of analytic psychology, which held that the faculties, ideas, and principles of the adult consciousness might always be assumed to exist in the child. The theory was: "If the adult consciousness shows the presence of principles not observable in the child consciousness, we must suppose nevertheless that they are really present in the child consciousness beyond the reach of our observation." The old argument was this: "Consciousness reveals certain great truths as simple and original: consequently they must be so. If you do not find them in the child-mind, then you must read them into it."¹

But if the organism theory probably influenced the analytic or "implicit faith" explanation, it most certainly lies at the very root of the second, or genetic, explanation. If the Church's mind has grown from a germ, if in its growth it has gone far beyond anything that can be seen in the germ, and if the course of the growth has been determined by a necessary law, it follows that the Church is being definitely described in terms of a single living organism. And, further, it must be noticed that this method of argu-

¹ Baldwin, *Mental Development*, p. 2.

ment treats the growth of the mind in a manner which is only appropriate to that of a *body*. We may fairly say that the oak has developed normally from the acorn, and that the development could not have taken place in any other way; but we cannot say with the same naturalness that a mind or consciousness can only develop in one way, and that there is no other way in which it could have developed. The mind remains distinct from the ideas which it fashions and develops; it can revise and alter them. If, therefore, we are told that the ideas and beliefs of the Church must have grown in exactly that way in which they have actually grown, it seems clear that the system of ideas and beliefs is being detached from the mind in which it was originally located, and is being made an independent thing, an organized body, self-subsistent, and growing according to some inherent *ratio seminalis* of its own. The Creed is no longer a system of beliefs fashioned (and corrected) by the mind of the Church—a mind which itself resides in an organized body of external institutions: rather, the Creed itself becomes an organic body, and develops in a fixed and necessary growth like any other living organism, such as a tree or an animal. Christian doctrine, in fact, is an organized idea developing according to an unalterable law in one particular shape and direction. Such a theory is enveloped in its own difficulties; it is hard to get a satisfactory grasp of it, except perhaps in connexion with the Hegelian philosophy, which would be a dangerous ally; and it involves the additional difficulty (which Tyrrell pointed out) that the further we go from the origin of Christianity the more perfect does Christianity become. As compared with the

developed tree, the sapling and the seed are simply immature and rudimentary things. Are we prepared to admit that the Christianity of the first century stands in that relation to the Christianity of the twentieth?

Moreover, it is really incompatible with any consistent idea of Truth. If Christianity is a substantiated idea, with its own natural mode of development, of assimilation and rejection of elements, of projection of principles and doctrines, it will be judged, as to essential nature, by its actual output. When ideas are regarded as organic developments, the biggest and strongest growth will be regarded as the correct or normal; others are rudimentary developments, freaks or eccentricities—*Securus judicat Orbis*. But this defiant attitude based on a big and imposing growth goes too far and proves too much. It crushes by force of weight, not of reason. In fact, an organic growth is to be credited, strictly speaking, not with *truth* but with *success*. Its growth is just evidence of its power to grow; it is what it had to be; it is rational in the sense that it is real. When we admire a well-grown tree, we say, How big! not, How true! not, How infallible! but, How healthy! The idea grows in the midst of an alien environment of thought and feeling, of politics and ethics, and will inevitably incorporate many elements foreign to itself (*errors*, as they would be called in other connexions); in fact, it may incorporate just as many of such elements as it is able to assimilate without self-destruction. If it swallows elements which it cannot assimilate, it will die; but in such a case we shall, both in charity and justice, ascribe its death rather to a weak digestion than to a prostrate mind. If *truth* is to be added

to vitality, this can only be done by the importation of an illegitimate yet congruous dogma, the dogma of Infallibility—illegitimate, because the whole notion of error or freedom from error is alien to the notion of organic development; yet congruous, because Infallibility is the antithesis of reasoning, and may be regarded as an apotheosis of victorious growth.

So it is only at a great cost that this form of the organism theory can be said to solve the problem before it. The problem was this: Admitting that the Creed of the Roman Church to-day is really different from that of primitive days, how can the Creed of to-day be an authoritative utterance, binding the consciences of the faithful? The answer is: Although it has developed far beyond what was contained in the original deposit, still the growth has been in accordance with a natural and necessary law; it has been the growth of a single and identical life; the potency of the growth must have resided in the germ of the deposit, or it would never have developed from it; the deposit itself is carried forward into fuller life in each succeeding stage, and therefore every such stage of the growth is as fully authoritative as the original deposit itself. The insuperable objections to such an argument are, first, that it turns the Creed into an independent idea, divorced from a mind which fashions and corrects, an idea growing and flourishing on its own account like some vegetable or animal organism; secondly, that it necessarily makes the later stages of Christendom superior to the earlier; and, thirdly, that it is inconsistent with any rational distinction between false and true.

But it is not enough to state these two theories of development—the *analytic* and the *genetic*. They are

sometimes combined ; and a great deal of the confusion which attaches to the whole controversy arises from this fact. A good instance is Newman's bewildering sermon on "The Theory of the Developments in Religious Doctrine" in his *University Sermons*.¹ He begins on the analytic line. We are told that Revelation (of "supernatural facts and actions, beings and principles") makes an inward impression or idea on the mind, and that this "inward idea" passes into intellectual dogmatic expression, by which it receives a piecemeal and necessarily imperfect interpretation. This dogmatic expression is itself the development of the idea, and is informed, moulded, and controlled by the idea which is thus explaining itself. And this development goes on "till what was at first an impression on the Imagination has become a system or creed in the Reason" (p. 329). The impression or idea or vision is identified with what Scripture means by "knowledge" in such a statement as "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." "Knowledge is the possession of those living ideas of sacred things, from which alone change of heart or conduct can proceed. This awful vision is what Scripture seems to designate by the phrases 'Christ in us,' 'Christ dwelling in us by faith,' 'Christ formed in us,' and 'Christ manifesting Himself unto us'" (p. 332).

Revelation, then, produces the inward idea, the inward idea clothes itself in the conceptual form of dogmatic statement, and the dogma is thus traceable back to the original revelation through an idea which

¹ Sermon xv. I owe my introduction to this sermon to Tyrrell's remarks in *Semper Eadem*.

has been, clearly or obscurely, consciously or unconsciously, at work from the beginning. For instance, "the dogma of the Double Procession was no Catholic dogma in the first ages ; yet if it is now to be received, as surely it must be, as part of the Creed, it was *really held everywhere* from the beginning, and therefore, in a measure, held as a mere religious impression, and perhaps an unconscious one" (p. 323). So far, then, we have the theory that dogma has grown from the original revelation and is traceable back to it ; but there is the significant fact that, between the original revelation and the dogma, an idea or impression is interpolated, produced by the revelation and in turn moulding and fashioning the dogma. The origin of the dogmatic system is not to be sought directly in the Scripture, but in the more fugitive and elusive sphere of impressions or ideas. The doctrine, so far, is the doctrine of a Scriptural deposit, containing "implicitly" the subsequent development of a dogma ; but the drawing of dogmatic conclusions is immensely facilitated by the mediating term of the "perhaps unconscious" impression.

But presently, without any warning, we are introduced to a quite different conception of the relation in which dogmatic development stands to the Scriptural deposit. We are told that the dogmatic system itself is begun in the Inspiration or Revelation of Scripture : "Scripture begins a series of developments which it does not finish." We need not, therefore, expect to find "every separate doctrine of the Catholic doctrine in Scripture" (p. 335). "The question at first sight occurs why such inspired statements (of Scripture) are not enough without further developments, but in truth, when reason has once been put on the investi-

gation, it cannot stop till it has finished it; one dogma creates another, by the same right by which it was itself created; the Scripture statements are sanctions as well as informants in the inquiry; they begin and they do not exhaust." Scripture sanctions the rational development of dogma because it is itself the first stage in such a development. There is unity of life and the necessity of growth, and statements not to be found in the early stage will be found in the later; in such a position they will be just as valid and authoritative as the Scriptural statements out of which they have grown and by which they are thereby sanctioned. Such an argument is clearly an instance of the *genetic* theory, the theory of a real growth beyond and outside of the contents of the original deposit, and yet a justifiable growth because a process in which the deposit itself was a preliminary and undeveloped stage in the evolution of an identical idea. In this sense he observes that, "though the Christian mind reasons out a series of dogmatic statements, this it has ever done, and always must do, not from those statements taken in themselves as logical propositions, but as being itself enlightened and (as if) inhabited by that sacred impression which is prior to them. . . . For though the development of an idea is a deduction of proposition from proposition, these propositions are ever formed in and round the idea itself (so to speak), and are in fact one and all only aspects of it" (p. 334).

Thus Newman's sermon gives us, mixed together, two quite distinct theories of development. In the first place, Scripture is presented to us as the *datum* which produces the inward idea, and, by means of the idea, the dogmatic system; and, in the second

place, as the earliest stage in the development of the dogmatic system itself. On the first view, it is the original deposit by which the dogmatic system must be tested ; on the second, it is the earliest outgrowth of the development itself. On the first view, Scriptural Revelation produces the idea or vision ; on the second, it is an elementary part of the dogmatic system which the idea produces.

Thus, where a doctrine cannot readily be recognized in Scripture considered as the *depositum fidei*, it is easy to take the other view, and say, "Why should you look for it there? Scripture is only the early stage of a dogmatic growth which the formative idea produces. The idea, which was working unconsciously in Scripture, woke to a full revelation of itself in later expressions which it put forth." In other words, where the Idea is interpolated between the Deposit and the Dogma—so that the order is Deposit, Idea, Dogma—it is possible either to identify Idea and Dogma, and develop them from the Scriptural Deposit ; or, in the many cases where this does not appear feasible, to identify the Deposit and Dogma, and develop them from the creative working of the Idea. The exigencies of apologetic will suggest sometimes the former, and sometimes the latter line of argument.

And, further, (c) a suggestion is made, though somewhat tentatively, that doctrinal development may not be a deductive inference from the past at all, but an induction from present-day observation and experience. Such theological ideas as those of the Trinity are "impressions of Objects." "As God is one, so the impression which He gives of Himself is one ; it is not a thing of parts ; it is not a system ; nor is it

anything imperfect, and needing a counterpart. It is the vision of an Object" (p. 330). "*This may be fitly compared to the impressions made on us through the senses.* Material objects are whole and individual; and the impressions which they make on the mind . . . integral and one. And in like manner the ideas which we are granted of Divine Objects under the Gospel . . . answer to the originals as far as this, that they are whole, indivisible, substantial, and may be called real, as being images of what is real" (p. 330). In such a case theological dogma, like physical science, will be framed through inductive processes of observation and comparison. In each case there is a permanent object, from which impressions are received; in each case we have continual access to the object itself; and such access to the object enables us to test the accuracy of our impressions, and revise (if necessary) the inductions which we make from them. This principle is clearly expressed on p. 328: "Surely, if Almighty God is ever one and the same, and is revealed to us as one and the same, the true inward impression of Him, made on the recipient of the revelation, must be one and the same; and since human nature proceeds upon fixed laws, the statement of that impression must be one and the same, so that we may as well say that there are two Gods as two Creeds."

Now it is clear that if this point of view can be developed, Theology will take its place as an inductive science, verifying its conclusions, not by inference from a past revelation, but by observations and experiments focussed on a present object. Why go back to the past at all, either in the form of a "deposit" or of a "germ," when there is to-day a living "Object"

yielding impressions of Himself, which impressions have merely to be scientifically stated in order to form a Creed which will be "one and the same" for all intelligent thinkers?

But this attractive and dazzling idea cannot be carried out, because, as Newman admits, we have no direct or immediate organ of perception in the case of spiritual objects corresponding to the organs of sense in the case of material objects (p. 333). It is the organs of sense which make possible the observations and experiments of inductive science; and the absence of any analogous organ in the possession of theology makes it impossible for theology to exhibit impressions which are "one and the same" for all, and which must yield "one and the same Creed" when scientifically combined.

Having no direct or immediate organ of spiritual perception, we can only receive "religious impressions" through channels which are either precarious or indirect, and which in either case are very different from the organs of sense which science has at its disposal. "Inspiration may be a gift of this kind to those who have been favoured with it; nor would it be safe to deny to the illuminating grace of Baptism a power at least of putting the mind into a capacity of receiving impressions; but the former of these is not ordinary, and both are supernatural." Apart from these we have such "secondary means" as the study of Scripture, intercourse with people who are "in possession of the sacred ideas," the study of Theology, "a continual round of devotion," or the working of a "keen faith" (p. 333). But these secondary means are all rooted in the dogmatic system itself, and cannot therefore be means of arriving at

the dogmatic system. Religious impressions depend on the Creed, instead of the Creed depending on religious impressions; the method, after all, must be one of deductive, not of inductive, inference; in developing religious truth we must go back to the original revelation and to the creeds in which the original impressions are perpetuated.

One could wish that Newman had pursued this last suggestion further; for it is nothing else than the momentous question, How far can we have first-hand experience of spiritual realities? or, Is mysticism possible? He suggests, indeed, that a "great sight" is vouchsafed to every Christian, and that he must try to express himself about it (p. 327). But if we ask how that great sight comes, we are merely referred, as has just been pointed out, to Inspiration, Sacramental grace, and the Creeds, the whole emphasis finally being laid on the last. It is, indeed, added that the Creed is itself formed under the enlightening influence of the "sacred impression" (p. 334); but this does not mean much, in view of the previous admission that we have no organ for the reception of such impressions; and though it may be suggested vaguely that the impression causes the Creed, the whole trend of the argument goes to show that it is the Creed that causes the impression.

The problem, then, of the nature and validity of mystical experience, and its influence on the formation of doctrine—a problem which is becoming of such importance to-day—is not dealt with systematically by Newman; but it could not be altogether ignored by such an acute and candid mind, and accordingly finds a place in his sermon, mixed up inextricably with two other theories of the development of doctrine.

2

The dangers which beset these speculations, and the consequences to which they point, may be illustrated by the position assumed by Father Tyrrell. Tyrrell not only expounds and criticizes Newman, but himself "develops" one side of the latter's development theory. Newman, as we have seen, recognizes and sanctions (alongside of other views) the view of Scripture *as a first stage in the development of doctrine*. Such a view obviously belongs to the "genetic" or "germ" philosophy, in which the emphasis is laid on unity of life rather than on identity of doctrine, as that which connects present-day dogma with the faith of the primitive age. Now by Newman himself such a view could be handled without immediate disaster; he believed the development of doctrine to be both necessary and infallible in all its stages; if, therefore, the Scriptural revelation takes its place within the process of development, it can do so without ceasing to be necessarily and infallibly true. But with Tyrrell things were very different. He saw that the huge and increasing "corpus" of dogma contained many statements which were untrue; the development of dogma therefore was not infallible, but simply a part of the chequered course of human speculation, subject to the errors and limitations to which such speculation is always liable; and since Scripture is just an elementary stage in the process of speculative development, it is no more infallible than any other stage. But behind the whole of the body of "Theology," or developing and fallible human speculation, there lies a "revelation," symbolically and mystically communicated to the first generation of Christians. This

revelation is *not* the Scripture record, since that has already been corrupted by speculation and is bound to the wheel of development ; it can only be described as an impalpable religious experience of which little or nothing can be predicated. Such experience is the life and substance of religion ; it is committed to no perilous statements in matters of science or history ; in fact, it never "materializes" sufficiently to make any statement definite enough to be controverted ; but under its influence men try to express themselves concerning it in Creeds and definitions ; all such expressions remain fallible and subject to revision, whilst above them all there floats the rosy cloud of revelation which has given the impulse to their creation, and will in due time stimulate men to destroy them and substitute others in their place.

Of such a theory one can only say that it makes any definite faith impossible. It is Roman enough to refuse to discriminate between true and false lines of doctrinal development, but not sufficiently Roman to accept the unanalysed development as infallible. The development cannot be justified on the ground of *identity*, by being traced back to the "implicit" faith of the early Church, since Tyrrell has triumphant evidence that it has gone immensely beyond the content of the original deposit. Nor can the *unity* of a divine life be pressed into its service, since the life is not divine, but is merely a shifting and variable development of human speculation.

A commoner type of modernism is that which refuses to accept the Gospel revelation as permanent and final merely from a nervous dread of being bound to a dead past, and of being called upon to abandon the principle of "progress" in religion. "Our old theo-

logians confined Christian revelation to the limits of the Apostolic age: this revelation, they said, ceased after the composition of the sacred writings. It follows that knowledge and Christian piety must be engaged in a continual pilgrimage towards the golden age lying behind us; this conscious, deliberate return constitutes all our progress," etc.¹

So, in order to escape this stagnation or retrogression, we are invited to concentrate our attention on the work of the indwelling Spirit rather than on that of the historical Jesus—in fact, to regard the revelation of Jesus as one phase or aspect in the evolution of the Spirit; whilst the evolution of the Spirit proves on examination to be nothing more than the developing course of human thought and speculation, and religion ceases to be a revelation at all, and becomes a subordinate branch of humane letters. Of course if that is the sort of religion people want, it is easily obtained, but they would do well to avoid the use of the word "revelation" in such a context. A divine revelation, as distinct from the development of human culture, or from a vague sentiment of things divine, implies an authoritative declaration about God; and such a declaration must have been delivered at some particular time and place. We hold that it was made in the life and teaching of Jesus Christ. If this is so, the teaching and life of Jesus Christ have a position *sui generis* in the history of the world. This revelation will, indeed, be progressively interpreted by the Spirit sent down from heaven to meet the needs and solve the problems of successive ages; but it is the key to the future just because it is true to the past; it can guide men's steps and strengthen their hearts just because

¹ *Hibbert Journal*, October 1913, p. 70.

it is a communication of grace and truth made by God to man in Jesus Christ. If we are to think clearly, we had better recognize that a "revelation" is something that comes from above, and that a definite message from above, whenever it comes, is as authoritative and permanent as God who sent it. We may refuse to recognize or accept it on such terms; but it is better to reject it openly than to give it a crooked interpretation.

For an ordinary Christian, then, the Gospel revelation is something final and unique, because it is an authoritative revelation which God makes about Himself. It is *not* the initial stage of a course of philosophy, whether such philosophy be looked upon as infallible and divine, or whether it be regarded as human and liable to error. The work of the Holy Ghost is to safeguard it in its unique transcendency, whilst translating and applying it to the needs of men as far as their pride and perversity permit.

We have considered various theories of the development of doctrine, and have recognized in the most prominent of them the dominant conception of an individual organism. The dogmatic system is presented to us as a substantial living Idea, which grows and expands and feeds in a given environment, assimilating or rejecting neighbouring ideas; modifying and in turn modified by its surroundings; driving its roots deeper and wider; incorporating into itself the speculations of science and philosophy, and making them auxiliary departments of its own exuberant life; growing far beyond any similarity to its earliest beginning, and yet claiming the closest relationship to that earliest beginning in virtue of an identical life which runs all through the development, and enables

us to view the luxuriant product of to-day as the necessary and legitimate outcome of the earliest germ. If we choose to invest the whole process with the character of infallibility, such a theory justifies belief in the whole complicated doctrinal system of modern Rome. In fact, it becomes positively embarrassing in its exuberant orthodoxy, since it insists that every casual or alien element which has been drawn into the life of the organism is an essential part of it and is invested with its divine inerrancy.

If, on the other hand, we regard the whole complicated growth as a growth of human thought and speculation, the development will still be regarded as a natural or even necessary evolution from the original germ, but it will lack any divine or infallible character ; it will be not from heaven, but of man. The former is very much the position of Newman, the latter that of Tyrrell.¹

The whole underlying conception of the nature of doctrinal development, in whichever direction it may be applied, is a good instance of the uncritical acceptance of the "organism" idea. Biology expounds with brilliant success the processes of growth and modification of structure in the case of animals and plants, the influence of environment, the continuity of development from a primitive germ, together with the changes which have marked that development and the

¹ Tyrrell admits (*Scylla and Charybdis*, p. 107) that he confounded biological and spiritual development. His essay, "Semper Eadem," in that book certainly illustrates this (see especially p. 115, where he meets the *false* theory of doctrinal infallibility with what he regards as the *true* theory of organic development). In matter of fact the theory of organic development is *not* the true theory of scientific advance ; and, on the other hand, it *was* accepted by Roman theologians in the cause of the dogma of infallibility.

novelties which it has introduced; and categories and presuppositions, legitimate and appropriate in that particular sphere, have been transferred without examination or criticism to the sphere of intellectual belief. Of course there is such a thing as the development of intellectual beliefs; this is implied in the mere fact that every creed or philosophy has its history, in which a certain unity of type is accompanied by much diversity of detail; and it is possible to form certain generalizations as to the order in which one stage succeeds another. But a development which is due to the rational and conscious co-operation, or conflict, of a multitude of distinct individuals is utterly distinct from the blind necessity which evolves the oak from the acorn, or the human body from the protoplasmic cell; and the distinction of subject-matter demands a difference in the methods of inquiry. In the Bible, the Church is often compared to an organism, but this is always done in order to emphasize some one particular point, and does not imply that the radical difference between the two orders of existence is ignored or denied. S. Paul has a celebrated passage in which he deals with the relation of various "members" to each other in the "body" of the Church. The principle which he has in view is that of "unity in diversity," or of the co-operation of different types and temperaments for the common good of the whole. He emphatically does not mean that the members are to conform themselves literally to the flesh-and-blood position of portions of an organism; if they did, no co-operation would be possible, because there would be no consciousness or freedom in their relations to each other. And so, too, when our Lord says, "I am the vine, and ye are the branches," He means that

apart from relationship to Him we can do nothing ; He does *not* mean that this relationship is to be a blind and unconscious one.

And as soon as we recognize that the development of the faith is due to the co-operation of a multitude of rational individuals, we see at once that such expressions as "necessity," irreformability," "*securus judicat orbis*" (which is the same as "survival of the fittest") are entirely out of place. Rational individuals are free, in every age, in matters of the faith ; they accept it or modify it with their eyes open. Again, they can recognize flaws in their own workmanship, or in that of their fathers, and can reform such flaws. Also, they can see the difference between a Church and a cabbage patch, and will not confuse size with spirituality, or numbers with intelligence.

It is indeed a blessed truth that individual members of the Church are not left entirely to themselves, but are guided by the Holy Ghost. We will consider in a moment some characteristics of this guidance, only insisting here that it cannot be held to deprive individuals of their capacity of free and conscious co-operation, and of deliberate and painful search after truth.

In the meanwhile there is another point to be noticed in the Roman theory of development. When the doctrinal system is conceived as an independent entity, developing according to its own independent laws, it becomes one-sided and abstract in character. In real life our beliefs are combined with our affections and our will ; and religion is a concrete fact comprehending them all in inseparable union. And the affections and the will influence our belief, humanizing it, and expressing it in terms of life and action. As thus

expressed it ceases to be a logical system of encyclopædic complexion, furnishing a cut-and-dried answer to every question which the inquisitive intellect chooses to propound; it becomes, rather, a golden treasury of essential truths, sufficient to guide the will and enkindle the affections; and so plays its part as one element in that way of life which we call religion. But once divorce this factor of religion from the other factors which accompany it in real life, and you completely change its character and destroy its usefulness. Once exalt belief into an independent system, once regard it as an independent organism with distinct and separate laws of development, and its growth will be a rank, unhealthy, and even noxious thing. Being exclusively doctrinal, it will insist on being comprehensively doctrinal; it will not dare to confess ignorance on any subject, but will go on for ever evolving statements and inferring conclusions which have no basis in fact and no bearing on religion. There are many details as to the state of the departed, and as to the punishment of forgiven sin, which we neither know nor need to know; nevertheless, we are promptly provided with a vast theoretical construction, subdivided and scheduled and tabulated with logical precision.

It is true that alongside the ponderous tomes of Dogma, the affections and the will have recognition given to them in treatises on Mystical and Ascetic theology; but the departments are kept distinct, instead of being allowed to interpenetrate each other in the unity of the Christian life. If such interpenetration were permitted, some doctrinal developments would have been estopped as unprofitable and unreal, whilst others would have been modified and enriched by contributions from the side of the heart and will.

In other words, doctrine ought to develop, not in a straight line, but in ascending coils or spirals (like those of a corkscrew); every curve should embrace and comprehend a certain response from the volitional and affective nature; and only on condition of this response being enveloped and secured should a further doctrinal ascent be made. By the spiral motion we do not advance from one doctrine to another until the practical accompaniments and implications of the earlier one have been grasped.¹

Further, by employing this process we recognize that our object in formulating doctrine is not speculative truth for its own sake, but speculative truth as one element, and that not quite the highest, in the concrete unity of the Christian life. We are to know God, not simply for the sake of the knowledge, but in order that we may love and serve Him; and know Him just enough to enable us to love and serve Him.

These, then, are the two main objections to the theories of development which we have been considering: first, they ignore or deny the free action of individuals, and substitute for it a single living, substantiated Idea, which has nothing to do with truth or falsehood; secondly, this Idea is an abstraction; it represents the logical faculty isolated from the other faculties which are united with it in the human personality, and which co-operate with it in the building up of a religious faith. In other words, we are presented with a single *intellectualist monstrosity* in place

¹ "Quandoque quasi in gyrum speculatio nostra inducitur, dum unicuique rei quae sunt cum multis communia considerantur." In such cases it is our custom "circumstantia vel cohærentia cuiusque rei curiosa prelustratione circumspicere."—Richard of S. Victor, *Benjamin Major*, i. 5.

of a multitude of individuals endowed with affections, will, and a reasoning capacity.

We believe, on the contrary, that the formation of doctrine is due to the free and conscious action of these individual personalities, guided but not overborne by the influence of the Holy Spirit. The individuality of the individual remains, and often exhibits itself in the forms of wilfulness, jealousy, lust of power, ignorance, impatience, and other disturbing forces. And when such individuals work together in the aggregate, as is especially the case in Church life, we have also the peculiar defects which belong to all such concerted action: the contagion of passion and prejudice, the dominance of a crude, one-sided notion, such as is alone capable of swaying the minds of a multitude, and the consequent abeyance of sound judgment and spiritual discernment. All these facts are incidental to human personality, and are only to be expected from the joint action of such personalities. They give rise to much error, sometimes disastrous and long continued, and only to be partially and painfully corrected in future ages. And, moreover, when they are corrected, the correction comes more often from the side of spiritual experience, from the expostulation of the affections and the will, than from the teaching faculty itself. The advance and purification of doctrine is not the intellectual amendment of a defective inference, but the renewed uplifting of the whole personality to God. And the Holy Spirit guides the Church into truth by thus influencing and inspiring the complete personality of its members, especially in its deeper and more spiritual capacities; or, more shortly, by bringing them into union with Christ as the source of all truth and goodness.



If then, in the light of these considerations, we ask What is the Truth, and where is it to be found? the only ultimate answer is, The Truth is Christ, the Wisdom and Word of the Father; in whom all the fullness of the Godhead dwells; and who in His turn dwells in us through the Spirit; and who by His indwelling life gives light to the soul that receives Him. Religious truth is not an organic growth, nor a system of philosophy, nor an encyclopædia of useful information, nor an ancestral prejudice, nor a poetical reverie, but the experience of a spiritual fact, the recognition of a spiritual presence. As presented in the Christian Church, it is not a bludgeon for beating down opposition, but a magnet attracting pure hearts and receptive minds.

But, it will be objected, we have here no test of the truth of particular doctrines; nothing to tell us whether we are to accept the doctrine of the Trinity, of Sacramental grace, of Purgatory, or Private Judgment, or the authority of the Pope.

The answer is, that the Christ who manifests Himself in our lives manifested Himself also in a particular human life in which He was incarnate, and that the witness which He bore to divine things in that human life is the complement and the criterion of the witness which He is bearing in ourselves. The Revelation given in His life and teaching is alike the foundation and the test of all spiritual experience and of all dogmatic statement. It is not a germ or early stage of religious speculation carried forward into, and superseded by, the fuller and more developed stages which follow; it is rather the permanent basis on which

successive structures of gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble may be built, each of them to be tested by fire, some abiding and others being burnt.¹ And the doctrines given in that basal Revelation will thus be the test of the revelation made in the heart of Christians, and also of the theological constructions of human reason.² Other doctrines will range themselves as more or less authoritative in proportion to the evidence which they adduce for themselves in that life and teaching; some we shall believe, and find satisfaction in believing, without holding that they must of necessity be believed by all men; others will be regarded as pious opinions which have not been verified or disproved by Scripture, and which we shall be inclined to approve or reject according as they are harmonious or discordant to the testimony of our hearts.

Such a conception of religious truth will fall far short of a system of cast-iron infallibility, which regards as absolutely and equally true all doctrines which have survived, however different they may be in their quality and their attestation; but we believe it to be truer to the essential character of religious belief, which is just one aspect of a spiritual life derived from Christ, experienced by individual men, and fostered by the Holy Ghost.

And just as religious belief is an aspect of religious life, so unity of teaching must depend on unity of life.

¹ I Cor. iii. 12.

² "Even if you think you have been taken up into that high mountain apart, even if you think that you see Christ transfigured, do not be too ready to believe anything you see in Him or hear from Him, unless Moses and Elias run to meet Him. I hold all truth in suspicion which the authority of the Scriptures does not confirm, nor do I receive Christ in His clarification unless Moses and Elias are talking with Him."—*Richard of S. Victor*; quoted by Gardner, *Cell of Self-knowledge*, p. xv.

The Church will only teach the same faith when the Church is united in a single life. What, then, do we mean by the unity of the Church's life? We mean, primarily, a *unity of origin* in Christ, from whom it is all derived; all baptized people have been incorporated into the life of Christ, and therefore into the life of the Church. But this unity of life requires also a *unity of organization*, by which the fellowship of Christians with each other shall be manifested and affirmed, and the grace of God dispensed with security and order. The third unity, the *unity of faith*, will only be fully attained when the inward unity of the baptized has been accepted and has been translated into the outward unity of the Society; it will be in and through the life of the Church that her faith will grow to completion.

As long as Christendom is rent asunder, each fragment will pursue the line of least resistance, *i.e.* will emphasize the supreme importance of that which is most congenial to its temperament—a proceeding which is directly contrary to the spirit of Catholicity; and this one-sided development of Church life will be accompanied by an equally one-sided course of instruction. Authority, Licence, Respectability, or whatever the vital principle of each aggregate may be, will be faithfully reflected in its teaching; and neither the life nor the teaching will be those of the Catholic Church. But when the fragments come together, bone to his bone, and are clothed with the flesh and blood of sympathy, forbearance, and love, the Spirit will breathe upon them, and there will be a teaching Church once more, in which the essential counsel of God will be delivered in due order and proportion.

In the meantime it may help forward the cause of

reunion if we are always reminding ourselves and others that the cognitive, the affective, and the conative aspects must be united in religion as they are in all conscious life ; that the cognitive, or doctrinal aspect of religion depends for its position on its relationship to the others ; and that in proportion as we give due prominence to the others, to the affective element or "love," and to the conative element or "works," we shall tend to come together in a common life, and thereby be enabled to unify the cognitive element or "faith." We are, in fact, to meet the difficulties of divergent belief, not so much by the frontal attack, which is controversy, as by getting above and beyond them on the devotional heights of the Christian life.

— T We are to understand that prayer, together with the works that flow from prayer, is the essential part of religion, and that faith is necessary as a means of prayer. This does not imply that prayer dictates the faith, that the *lex orandi* is the *lex credendi*, ~~that the~~ cognitive element is merged and lost in the affective and the conative ; on the contrary, the affections and the will can only be set in motion by the message of faith. But it does mean that faith is to be regarded as leading up to and issuing in prayer, not prayer as an incidental duty which flows from faith. "We must believe rightly in order that we may pray well" must be our principle rather than "We must pray to God because we believe in Him" ; *credo ut orem* rather than *credo, ergo oro*. And if prayer and the works which it prompts are really our objective, we have at once a link of connexion with other Christians. We all pray ; and we can take counsel together as to the means of making our prayers more real and effective. If, in such conference, we present the doctrine of the

Real Presence from the point of view of its effects on prayer, and the doctrine of the Apostolic succession in its relation to the Sacrament, we shall be far more likely to win people to the acceptance of these beliefs than by making them the theme of doctrinal controversy. Of course they have their intellectual attestation, which is valuable and indispensable; but their ultimate significance and value lie in their devotional and practical bearings. And, on the other hand, we shall not only be able, acting in this spirit, to make acceptable contribution to the common stock of Christian life and experience, but shall welcome contributions made to it by others. We shall appreciate, and try to imitate, the affective enthusiasm of the Salvation Army, and the conative skill in organization of the Wesleyans, and on the cognitive side shall gratefully acknowledge the Roman Church's unfailing sense of the supernatural and of the reality of Sacramental grace. The Christian life as a whole will be a sort of testing-ground for doctrines, as it is for enthusiasms and for policies; each item, whether it comes from the side of faith or of love or of works, will have to adapt itself to the whole of its environment; each doctrinal item which can grow under these conditions, and can also satisfy the canons of intellectual criticism, will be welcomed and accepted; and a body of doctrinal truth will be developed, which will speak not as the scribes of controversy, but with the authority of the whole Christian life, and of Christ Himself present therein. Then there will be a united Church, which will live the Christian life, thus made up of consentient elements; and the unity of the Church will be reflected in the unity of its teaching. May "our good Lord the Holy Ghost" vouchsafe to give us, on our repent-

ance, His gift of unity, manifold in blessings ; not the least of which blessings will be that " all thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children." ¹

■ Isaiah liv. 13.

IV

PER CRUCEM

1. CHRISTIANITY A PERSONAL INTIMACY WITH CHRIST.
2. FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS.
3. DESTRUCTION OF SELF-LOVE.
4. VICARIOUS PENANCE.
5. THE THEOCENTRIC LIFE.
6. PRAYER.
7. COMMUNION.
8. THE RISEN LIFE.

IV

PER CRUCEM

THE last paper was concerned with the dangers which beset a development of doctrine. Doctrine is the *intellectual* expression of religion ; it is the skeleton of rational fact which is intended to be clothed with the flesh and blood of affection and set in motion by the power of the will ; isolated from these, it is an inhuman and rather ghastly thing. Its verification, which ought to be sought largely in the answering testimony of the Christian *life*, is sought in the intellectualist dogma of infallibility ; this infallibility is construed to include all matters which bear, even indirectly, on the faith ; and the hopeless attempt is made to identify this swollen cyclopædia of speculation with the faith once delivered to the Saints. Leaving this one-sided development of the rational aspect of religion, let us turn to another element, the element of moral and spiritual *discipline*, which must not only accompany but interpenetrate belief, if religion is to have health and reality for us creatures of a composite nature.

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1

For a Christian, growth in religion is growth in his personal relations with Christ. He will be growing

in religion if he is becoming able to speak to Christ with less reserve, and to spend more time in His company ; if he resents dishonour to Christ more than dishonour to himself ; if he works for Christ, and not for his own credit and reputation ; if he refuses to rest whilst any obstacle remains to keep him away from Christ ; if, consequently, he is getting to hate sin more than anything else in the world.

Growth in religion, then, is not the same as growth in theology. Theology deals with religion on its intellectual side ; it deals with our knowledge of God as one special department of knowledge ; it elaborates this particular department of knowledge, defends it and shows its reasonableness, and defines its relation to other departments. But, then, religion is not merely intellectual ; it is not merely knowledge ; it is the attitude of our whole personality to the Person of God ; it is the response, above all, of our love to the revelation of His love. It concerns our reason, our will, and affections—especially the last ; but theology only looks at it under its rational aspect. So far, religion differs from knowledge in being fuller and richer, more complex and manifold in its relationship to its object. It is *more* than ordinary knowledge, inasmuch as it recognizes and employs the whole of our nature in its quest for God. And, on the other hand, this greater richness and complexity is an embarrassment to religion when it tries to express itself as a branch of knowledge. It is *less* than ordinary knowledge, inasmuch as the machinery of the intellect is ill adapted to giving expression to spiritual truths. It can hint at the existence of such realities by the use of gross material metaphors, but it cannot produce a rational knowledge of them in the sense that it can produce a

rational knowledge of plants or planets. A man might as well try to express his love for his mother in a series of syllogisms as to express his religion in the moulds of science. Theological science is useful, then, in defending the rational outworks of religion, its historical credentials, and so forth; but its inner essence of love and service is too subtle a thing to be caught in the meshes of that net. So S. Theresa says: "The less I understand, the more I believe. The longer I live, the greater is my faith." Faith grows out of life. And, again, "It is good for theologians to study these things, for they have to defend the faith by their knowledge; it is enough for us to receive those lights from God which He chooses to give us."¹

So the teaching of theology cannot produce a personal intimacy with God; and it is just in this personal intimacy that religion consists. If we are not advancing in this personal intimacy, our religion will either crystallize into theology, and theology will become increasingly a branch of philosophical or literary culture; or else it will transform itself into moral sentiment or social service according as the feelings or the will are more strongly developed. And in becoming any of these excellent things (for culture, moral feeling, and social service are all excellent) it will proportionately cease to be religion. Religion is not any of these things, though it is, and ought to be, closely bound up with them. The culture and morals and philanthropy of a religious man will be different from those of other men—and this difference will constitute the very "prick and point" of religion itself. For the religious man, they are the ladders by which he ascends to God and descends from God—the avenue

¹ *Life*, by a Carmelite Nun, p. 569.

by which he approaches God, and by which he is carrying back to the world some message with which God has charged him. God is not, at least for him, a mere ceremonious expression for human ideals of culture or morals or philanthropy. God is a real Person, to be known and loved and served ; and fragments, coarse and material fragments, of this devotion to God will make their appearance as culture or morals or philanthropy ; but all such fragments will, if attentively studied, be found to be stamped and sealed with marks of their supernatural origin, like a fragment of iron-stone seared by the lightning. His culture is his effort to see God everywhere, as " the Infinite Truth in which all other truths are contained " ; his morality is his purification of body and soul for communion with God ; his philanthropy is his love of his fellow-creatures as God's children, and his burning desire that God may be glorified in them. And growth in religion is a process by which God takes possession of all these spheres of knowledge and love, and so draws nearer in personal intimacy to us. First, they point away beyond themselves to God as the only possible source of their mysterious greatness ; and then they become modes in which God reveals something of Himself to men.

And this revelation is made perfectly in Christ. Through Christ the Godhead is manifested to human capacities of apprehension, and along the several lines of apprehension which have been described. Knowledge, morals, philanthropy flow out from Christ ; but He is more than any or all of them ; and Religion is intimacy with Christ Himself, who is their source and substance and perfection ; Christ as a Person who exhibits these qualities in the manifestation of His personal life, not Christ as a mere impersonal title for the qualities themselves.

Once more, then, religion is personal intimacy with Christ, and growth in religion is growth in that intimacy. When this fact is once understood, we know where we are and what we have to aim at, and all sorts of impediments fall away. The slavery to habit and convention is abolished in favour of a more free and natural relationship. We are no longer like an old horse with blinkers on, proceeding at a uniform jog-trot along a uniform high-road, cheered by the prospect of uniform rations at each day's end. We become rather—if we have sufficient humility to brook the comparison—like the wild ass described in the book of Job, who is sent out free, with bands loosed ; who scorns the multitude of the city, and regards not the crying of the driver ; who roams through the wilderness, and ranges over the mountains, and searches after every green thing.¹ If it is Christ whom we want, we shall follow Him wherever we can catch a glimpse of His presence or an echo of his voice, without being fettered by stereotyped modes of expression or approach.

Again, we are delivered from partial and one-sided developments ; from the harsh austerity of the moralist, with its tendency to narrow and uncharitable criticism ; from professional philanthropy, with its cut-and-dried maxims and its liability to fussy self-assertion ; from the airs and graces of the man of culture, and his contempt for the Philistinism of the uneducated.

The personal life of Christ transcends and combines and purifies all these modes of energy by uniting them to each other in Himself ; and in union, growing union, intimacy with that life we gain the freshness and variety, the charity and strength, the sanity and insight, which keep our own life wholesome and religious.

¹ Job xxxix. 5-8.

2

Now the nature of religion, touched on above, and its distinctness from other things, is shown very strikingly in the fact that religion, unlike them, can only be approached in a spirit of penitence and self-humiliation. This spirit is, in fact, the constant characteristic of religion; it is only deepened and strengthened in the process of religious growth. Such a fact would be inexplicable if religion were merely a branch of "humaner letters" or a synonym for philanthropic action; we do not look for humility in "Gigadibs the literary man," nor are we surprised at its absence in a Social Democrat or, perhaps, in a Charity Organiser; but we feel that it is a natural and reasonable thing if religion is union with God, and that it is a necessary and inevitable thing if that God is Christ Crucified. The mingled glory and shame of the Cross—the glory of a God dying for men, and the shame of men's sins for which He died—that is the twofold root of a Christian's self-humiliation. He humbles himself in the presence of that which is supremely great; he humbles himself at the revelation of his own littleness, meanness, and filthiness; he humbles himself with a humility which is made up of wonder, gratitude, and self-contempt. He sees instinctively that Calvary must be for him the Mount of Ascension towards God; that he can only escape from his own mean, dirty little life by getting into some vital relationship with the Crucified; that intimacy with Christ must begin, for the sinner, by being a fellowship with His sufferings. And, indeed, there is no other way. As no man can come to the Father but by Christ, so no man can come to Christ

but by the path of those sufferings by which He put Himself on the level of sinners. The Cross is the doorway through which he must pass. But this is a "hard saying," and people have made many efforts to get round it. Sometimes they maintain, with the Free Brethren of the Fourteenth Century, that they are so completely emancipated from sin that they can omit the Cross and go straight to Christ Glorified. Sometimes they argue, with the materialism of to-day, that there is no such thing as sin, and therefore no occasion for the Cross. In the former case spiritual pride, and in the latter the pride of the flesh, deny the reality of sin, in order to escape the claims of the Cross. Or, again, certain Protestants tell us that the way of the Cross is only faith in the Crucified; that we have but to believe that Christ died for us, and in that belief the significance of the Cross is exhausted. Such a notion that religion consists in a rational belief is the "intellectualist" heresy which confounds religion with theology. It is certainly curious that S. Paul's name should ever have been invoked on behalf of such a theory, since S. Paul's doctrine of the Cross is that we are not only to believe in it, but to experience it. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin"; "If we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him"; "I am crucified with Christ"; "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus."¹ These passages, which contain the very pith of S. Paul's teaching, clear the ground, and lay down the principle that to enter into, to share, to experience Christ's sufferings, with the shame and

¹ Rom. vi. 6, 8; Gal. ii. 20; 2 Cor. iv. 10.

ignominy therein involved, is the first step towards union with Him, and with the most high God through Him.

The point is that Christ is here performing a great act of reparation on our behalf, and that we are to unite ourselves, by inward repentance and outward sufferings, to this action of His ; so that it shall not be simply done by Him on our behalf, but by Him in us, and by us through Him. His act of reparation is mainly outward ; since He was sinless, it could only consist in bearing the consequences of sin, doing penance for sin in the endurance of the suffering which sin brings ; and this vicarious penance is complete, being continued up to the end and crown of all suffering, namely death. His penance is the utter abandonment, the complete surrender, the entire casting away of life itself, as the only sufficient satisfaction for sin.

But our penitence is inward as well as outward, and more important in its inward than in its outward form. Its essence is real sorrow for sin and hatred of sin ; and this must in itself be felt within, though it may be expressed and stimulated by outward penance.

Thus what corresponds to the abandonment of life—as the climax of outward suffering—in the case of our Lord, is the inward hatred of sin and the destruction of sin in our own case. This inward sorrow wins forgiveness by being presented to the Father in union with the sufferings of Christ, through which it is deepened and strengthened and purified. “So assist us with Thy most precious death, that being dead to the world, we may live only unto Thee.” Our penitence is assisted and perfected by being lifted up into union with Christ’s death, and, as thus

perfected, is presented as the ground of our forgiveness. We are to be forgiven not merely because of His vicarious act of reparation, but also because of this fellowship of ours in His sufferings. We die with Him when our penitence is perfectly consummated in the destruction of sin, even as His penance was perfected in that climax of self-appointed suffering which was His death.

And our penitence wins forgiveness directly it is there ; and both the penitence and the forgiveness are rooted in Christ. We must try to simplify our ideas on this subject. We multiply and subdivide processes in a rather bewildering way. We talk of claiming forgiveness on the ground of repentance, as though forgiveness were not essentially involved in the fact of repentance ; we talk of repentance and forgiveness being followed by restoration, as though repentance and forgiveness were not identical with restoration. And then we go on to talk of the guilt of sin being removed by forgiveness and restoration, whilst the punishment of sin goes on ; and sometimes, again, we distinguish the punishment of sin from the natural consequences of sin, and say that the consequences continue when the punishment has ceased. The whole atmosphere becomes legal and scientific, and we have a good example of the difference between theology and religion.

Sin is separation from the love of God ; and is the same as its punishment, and also as its natural consequences, except as far as these latter are purely physical. Conviction of sin is a consciousness of the misery of this separation, and, raised to a certain power, is penitence, pardon, restoration, and incipient sanctity. If we feel miserable, desolate, and forlorn

at being cut off from the love of God, we have a conviction of sin, which is also the germ of sanctity ; since it is a misery which wreaks summary vengeance on the sins which were its cause. It may be said that this sense of misery is a self-regarding thing, not at all equivalent to true repentance. But the misery is misery at being separated from the love of God ; and it seems to me that we take the deepest view of sin, and pay the highest compliment to God, when we declare that separation from God is sheer misery, a desolating calamity which takes all the joy and brightness out of life ; that God's love, or our union with God, is our supreme happiness and that anything which cuts us off from that is an obstacle which must be removed if life is to be worth living.

We are told that when S. Francis met any peculiarly abandoned ruffians he never reproached them for their sins, but respectfully and sympathetically condoled with them on the terrible calamity under which they were suffering, and which prevented them from praising and loving God as much as they would have wished to do. We can imagine some swarthy Umbrian brigand scratching his head in perplexity, and trying to grasp the wholly unexpected point of view thus presented to him. And we can well understand that the appeal would be successful ; it had indeed two elements of success ; it recognized real, though latent goodness in the sinner ; and presented God as the sum of human happiness, which every heart naturally and necessarily seeks. It told of a love on God's part, which finds an echo in every human soul ; of God as the fulfilment and satisfaction of man's life, which is famished and dark and dying apart from God. This sense of misery, then, in its

earliest stage is a sense of sin and of sin's penalties or consequences ; as it grows stronger, it becomes penitence and forgiveness, in that mingled process by which penitence brings forgiveness and the forgiveness deepens the penitence ; and in its intenser form it is a consuming thirst for God, a blazing anger against all that keeps the soul from God, an anguish that is another name for sanctity, and has its full compensation and reward in God's presence.

And surely to think of religion as happiness is better than to think of it as unhappiness ; it is better to think of the highest life as an inherently attractive thing than to think of it as a gloomy destiny which we can only embrace by abandoning all hopes of joy and happiness. We too often take Dante's signboard of the Inferno and place it over the door of Paradise : " All hope abandon, ye who enter here." Yet it is truer and better to think of God as the source of joy and gladness than as One whom a stern sense of duty alone can induce us to approach ; it is truer and better to think of sin as an obstacle to our enjoyment of God's love rather than as an occasion for the manifestation of God's anger ; it is truer and better to think of repentance as a forward step towards intimacy and friendship with Christ rather than as a half-hearted abandonment of the friendship of the world.

3

The Christian religion, then, is personal intimacy with Christ ; and this intimacy begins by being a fellowship with His sufferings. By His sufferings He entered into the misery of a manhood which had fallen away from the love of God. He made that

misery His own by sympathy of soul and anguish of body, and thereby purified and deepened it ; purified it from the hopelessness of dull remorse ; and deepened it by a new astounding revelation of the love of God. Thus, from the side of man, His sufferings become, for all who share them, the creation of a true and progressive penitence ; from the side of God, they are an offer of forgiveness following on an act of perfect reparation which those sufferings made. His Cross draws down God's full forgiveness for all who are drawn up by it to full contrition. And the forgiveness and contrition are manifested in a new life in which misery at the loss of God becomes a steadfast longing of the forgiven, contrite soul for God.

If, then, intimacy with Christ must begin as fellowship with His sufferings, how is this fellowship effected ? By an inward hatred of sin, uniting us to Christ in Gethsemane ; and by acceptance of outward humiliation, uniting us to Christ on Calvary ; by penitence and penance. And both are Christ's work in us. We must not think that we can first be penitent, and then offer our penitence to Christ, to be, as it were, stamped and certified by such offering ; or that we can first " bring forth worthy fruits of penance " by ourselves, and then attach them to Christ's Cross. Rather, it is *Christ in us* who melts our hard hearts into penitence ; and *Christ in us* who nerves our wills to the bearing of our crosses. We have fellowship with Christ's sufferings, not by doing something and bringing it to Him, but by bringing ourselves to Him that He may do it in us. By meditation on His sufferings we can yield our hearts to Him to be filled with abhorrence of ourselves and our sins ; by Holy Communion we can receive the

Sacrament of His sufferings, to give us strength to suffer.

And the immediate object and outcome of this suffering is death—the actual killing of the root out of which sin grows. As Christ's satisfaction was continued up to the utter abandonment and destruction of physical life, so our suffering with Him is to be carried forward to the utter killing of the life of sin. We are not merely to suffer, but to die with Him. And the origin of sin is self-love. Out of that egg have been hatched all types of self-assertion; the peacock-struttings of our idiotic conceit, and the turkey-cock gobblings of our impotent anger, together with all the lust of the flesh and the pride of life; everything in fact that makes us foolish and ineffective and ridiculous and mean.

And it is no good pruning away one or two poisonous suckers of that plant; the whole root must be killed. If we could destroy one sin by itself, we should not have done much except, perhaps, strengthen the others; but we cannot thus destroy one isolated sin. All sins, just because they spring from the same source, are in league with each other. If we are only attacking the sins of the flesh, then the pride of life, with its conceit and vain-glory, will flourish more rankly than ever; and, in close alliance with it, will appear the Satanic growth of malice and envy and hatred; and very soon, in their congenial society and under their fostering influence, the old lusts will reappear, more insolent than ever. There is a horrible solidarity between all the forms of evil; one suggests another; one shelters, conceals another until it is strong enough to come out into the open and assert itself. And this is only natural, since self-love is the

common nature of them all, and self-assertion is the development of that nature. Whether the self-assertion take the form of lust or conceit or covetousness ; or a desire for success or recognition in some particular line ; or of envy, hatred, and depreciation of other people ; or of listlessness, accidy, sulkiness, and mock humility—it is all of one common stock : self-glorification is at the bottom of it all. This, then, self-love, self-assertion, self-glorification, is the root principle that has got to be killed with the death of Christ. It must be killed if there is to be any communion with God. Self-assertion is exactly that which cuts us off from Him, since the assertion of self is rebellion against any higher law or principle ; the worship of self is the abrogation of the worship of God. Self-love cannot bear the idea of dependence or submission ; “ Nature always intends itself.” And if we are to get rid of misery, the misery of having lost God, and the misery of failing to find anything to put in His place, it can only be done by the destruction of that evil principle which first severed us from the love of God. By the destruction of self-love, the old misery of having lost Him will be transformed into a yearning to recover Him, which is itself a foretaste of heaven. But no compromise is of any use. It is no good tearing off a strip of spiritual aspiration and stitching it on to the garment of self-love. Such a purple patch will simply stand out in glaring contrast to the natural selfish life to which it has been annexed ; it will appear there merely as an anomaly, an eccentricity, a fad. Torn from the context of the spiritual life as a whole, to which it properly belongs, it will have no enduring value ; its colour fades ; its texture decays ; it becomes assim-

lated to the stained, threadbare garment into which it has been incorporated. No; the whole sin-stained garment has to be burnt, and a whole new one taken on in its place.

And this principle applies beyond the case of the moral nature, though it is most immediately obvious there. It holds good equally of the intellect. Real knowledge of God is a gift of the Holy Ghost, through His indwelling in a humble and receptive soul. In the absence of these conditions men may acquire a certain sort of knowledge "gotten by reason and discourse, by teaching of men, and by study of Holy Scripture, without spiritual gust or affection, or inward relish felt by them. . . . This knowledge alone is but water, unsavoury and cold. And, therefore, if they that have it would humbly offer it up to our Lord, and pray for His grace, He would by His blessing turn their water into wine, as He did at the prayer of His Mother at the marriage feast; that is to say, He would turn their unsavoury knowledge into true wisdom, and their cold natural reason into spiritual light and burning love, by the gift of the Holy Ghost."¹ Unless it is thus transformed, it becomes arrogant and conceited, and is a source of strife, controversy, and heresy. Instead of learning quietly about God by listening to God's voice speaking to a pure and humble heart, we work out our own views and theories and thrust them down other people's throats. Such knowledge, as S. Paul saw, is merely carnal, and its manifestations—emulation, strife, jealousies, factions, divisions, heresies²—are rightly to be classed amongst the works of the flesh. A carnal and corrupt knowledge of God, then, like other aspects of

¹ Hilton, *Scale of Perfection*, pp. 4-6.

² Gal. v. 20-1.

the carnal nature, must be utterly abolished, entirely transformed by a miracle of divine grace. In itself it is one particular manifestation of pride and self-assertion ; and as such must be done to death through participation in Christ's sufferings.

And, lastly, the same treatment must be applied to the will, though that is the sphere in which we are often most reluctant to admit it. When we have been forced to recognize the emptiness of our heart and the blindness of our mind and the need of a thorough and comprehensive reformation, we think that this reformation is one which we are quite competent to effect. " Now that I see what is wrong," we say, " I can soon put it right. When I make up my mind that something has got to be done, I can do it." So out of humiliation in one quarter, up springs pride in another. Then we soon find that the will, which is to be used against the carnal nature, has itself become carnal, has been infected and corroded by having been used as an instrument of sin. We cannot use the will for years as the servant of uncleanness and iniquity, and then find it equally serviceable in the cause of righteousness and holiness. The will is not a dead external instrument that is indifferent to the use which is made of it. It is a living part of the self, and affected by the general condition of the self. A carnal will cannot rule a corrupt heart. Rather, the will must itself be made free from sin and weakness through the transformation of the whole man ; and the first stage of this transformation must be the destruction of all that is carnal and corrupt. The whole self must be emptied of the deceitfulness of pride ; then it can be filled with Christ.

It seems to me that the reason why we do not make more progress in religion is that we do not take sufficient pains in this necessary work of purging our soul from self-assertion and emptying it of pride. "Thou hast satisfied the *empty* soul, and hast filled the *hungry* soul with goodness." "He hath filled the *hungry* with good things, and the rich He hath sent empty away." "Thou sayest I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked."¹ Hence the lukewarmness which makes progress impossible. An age that is rich in knowledge and culture, as well as in material comfort, turns instinctively from the doctrine of mortification and the self-emptying of heart, mind, and will. And it is quite able to justify this attitude. "We must not be morbid in our religion," it says. "We must not dwell too exclusively on the Cross of Christ. We must remember the glory of the Incarnation which preceded it and the triumph of the Resurrection which followed it. S. Paul always brought the death and the Resurrection of Christ into close connexion; it was left for the Middle Ages, an age of darkness and despair and ignorance, to isolate the Passion of Christ from the rest of His work, and to dwell upon it with a gloomy and unhealthy fanaticism. It is the gospel of the Resurrection and Ascension which needs to be preached to-day—a gospel which will do justice to human nature, sanctify its achievements in the past, and inspire it with still higher and purer ideals for the future." And of course there is a certain amount of truth in such a contention, as I hope to

¹ Rev. iii. 17.

indicate later. But on listening to such language, one has an uneasy feeling that the Cross is not really being brought into line with the other factors of Redemption, but is being tacitly ousted and rejected; and one must insist that in such a case, or in anything approaching such a case, the very words Redemption and Resurrection cease to have a meaning; and that Religion itself is being re-edited as a cult of progressive humanity. By all means let us recognize and praise God for all the force and splendour of the Resurrection and Ascension, provided we recognize also that we have no direct touch or connexion with them ourselves. It is the Cross with which we are in direct and immediate contact; everything else comes to us through the Cross, grows out of the tree of the Cross. It is true that Christ's presence in us brings with it all the glory of His exalted life; but then Christ's presence in us is only made possible by the Cross. Once His Cross is planted in our hearts, it will "bring forth buds and bloom blossoms" of sanctity and progress and triumph; but it is the Cross alone which brings us into touch with the Christ who is the source of these graces; it is only as the crucified sin-bearer that He can enter into the lives of us sinful sons of men. And I think that one reason why Saints are so scarce to-day is that this doctrine of the Cross is not being taught with sufficient emphasis. It has not its proper place in the teaching of the Church; the right proportion is not observed. For one book dealing with ascetics there are a hundred devoted to the statement, or re-statement, or over-statement, or under-statement of Dogmatics. We are suffering from a surfeit of intellectualism in religion; rational assent is being aimed at to the exclusion of discipline;

the mind is being dealt with far more than the affections or the will, and the knowledge thus attained is often "unsavoury and cold," "without spiritual gust," because the mind which attains it has not been mortified, *i.e.* emptied of conceit, and filled with the Holy Ghost. And this one-sided and unmortified development is fatal to the development of sanctity.

The whole nature must be killed and emptied, that the whole may be quickened and filled by Christ. This has ever been the doctrine and the practice and the life-history of the Saints. The Cross has been the ground and secret of it all; the Cross has taken root in their hearts, and has flowered and borne fruit in knowledge for the mind, strength for the will, and purity of heart. The tree bearing this fruitage is the tree of the Cross; it is always the Cross that has made the Saint. And so, if we have not enough Saints, it is because we have not got enough of the Cross. Thank God there is a great deal to be thankful for in an improved standard of clerical life, to say nothing of the revival of religious orders amongst us. Respectability of conduct, hard work, zeal for the Christian cause, cheerful acceptance of hard conditions, intelligent setting forth of the Church's Creed, all this combines to create the type of Priest with which we are familiar, and for which God be praised. What is there to complain of, then? What is lacking? I answer, it is not strictly that anything is lacking; the fault lies in an excess rather than a deficiency. There is too much; there is an element of self-assertion mingling with all these good things. Take that away, and the whole work and life will be raised to a higher plane; it will then grow out of the Cross, the Cross on which self-love is slain, and in

that fruitage will be contained the seed of sanctity. There are never many Saints on earth at once ; for Saintliness, even with the special grace which sustains it, must always, I imagine, be a desperately difficult thing. But, at any rate, we can lift up our eyes to the ideal ; we can take more trouble about the crucifying of self-love ; we can determine to plant the Cross in our hearts, and leave it to God to give it such growth and increase as He pleases. And it may be that our struggles and efforts after mortification and self-discipline will promote the growth of sanctity in other lives less stained with sin, in other hearts where there is a better soil than in our own. And so, by God's mercy, we poor sinners who can never be Saints ourselves may yet be *training* Saints, who, by the complete mortification of their lives and the closeness of their union with Christ, will live to the glory of God and the immeasurable benefit of His Church. *O Crux, ave, spes unica !*

So far, we have thought of the Cross as that which we are to bear and on which we are to suffer, from the point of view of our own redemption. We must do penance for our sins if we are to claim the merits of Christ's penance ; we must suffer with Him if His sufferings are to have an atoning efficacy on our behalf. " If we die with Him, we believe that we shall also live with Him." ¹ This means that our suffering has to be added to Christ's suffering if our redemption is to be secured ; that Christ's sufferings alone would be insufficient for that purpose ; there would be something lacking in them, some deficiency

¹ Rom. vi. 8.

which has to be made up, and which is made up by each Christian as he appropriates and assimilates and experiences and shares those sufferings which Christ endured on his behalf. Christ's sufferings are *deficient* until we share them. Thus, if we would obtain the benefit of Christ's Passion, we must, on our part, "fill up that which is lacking of His afflictions."¹ It must necessarily be so. Christ suffered, indeed, vicariously; He made a supreme act of reparation and expiation on our behalf; offered a sacrifice which wins our forgiveness; but the sufferings were to be shared by those for whom they were endured. This was clearly laid down by Christ Himself. Take those consecutive verses of S. Luke (ix. 22-3) recording His words: "The Son of man must suffer many things and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up. And He said unto all, If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me." The merits of the Cross are imparted to those who share the Cross; "it carries him who carries it."

I have alluded to this truth above; but I repeat it here because I want to go on to a special aspect of it. We may share the afflictions of Christ, and thereby fill up that which is lacking in them, not only for our own sake, but for the sake of others; in S. Paul's words, "For His body's sake, which is the Church." The principle is exactly the same. Christ's atoning sufferings must be shared if they are to be efficacious for our souls; but we may share them, enter into fellowship with them, on behalf of other people as well as in working out our own salva-

¹ Col. i. 24.

tion. For some strange reason people have tried to draw a distinction between the two cases. They would admit that in the latter, in working out our own salvation, we do enter into fellowship with the atoning or redemptive sufferings of Christ; but maintain that, where our object is the salvation of others, the sufferings of Christ which we share are not redemptive or atoning sufferings at all, but merely "edifying works" of self-denial in which we follow the example of Christ and help to carry forward His work; much in the same way as a disciple of a social reformer might work and suffer in the effort to forward his master's principles. People who argue thus are afraid that, if Christ's atoning sufferings are shared on behalf of others, a door is opened to "an assertion of the merits of the Saints, and (as a necessary consequence) of the doctrine of indulgences."¹ That is, they believe that the unique character of Christ's redemptive sufferings would be impaired if any man were to share them (or fill up that which is lacking in them) on behalf of any other man. But the fatal objection to such a theory is that it establishes a radical and quite unreal distinction between the act of sharing Christ's sufferings on our own behalf and the act of sharing them on behalf of others. It seems clear that *the act of sharing them* must be understood in the same sense in the two cases, whilst the object of motive in doing so is different. Now, when we are aiming at our own salvation, the sufferings of Christ which we share are undoubtedly His atoning sufferings; the afflictions are those of His agony and death. This is clearly implied in S. Paul's words already quoted: "That I may know Him, and the power of His resur-

¹ Lightfoot, on Col. i. 24.

rection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed unto His death, if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection of the dead"; "I am crucified with Christ"; "Always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus." And in this case the sharing of His sufferings does not impair the unique character of an atonement once for all accomplished. It merely means that our penitential sufferings, poor and imperfect in themselves, are united to His redemptive sufferings, and thereby are raised and purified and rendered acceptable to God. Why, then, should the unique character of the Redemption be impaired when we share its sufferings on behalf of other people? Why can we not do penance on their behalf with the same whole-hearted reliance on Christ's atonement which we feel in doing penance for ourselves? Why cannot *this* penance, endured for others, be similarly united with Christ's redemptive sufferings, and so be rendered acceptable to God on their behalf? The answer, in which the whole pith of the objections is contained, takes the following form: Penitential suffering must be felt by each sinner for himself; it is essentially a personal experience, and cannot be undergone by one sinner for another. And it is argued that here there is an essential difference between praying for people and suffering for them. The former is right and good; because in prayer we are asking that the sinner may himself become penitent; in the case of suffering we are trying to do his penitence for him. And it is probably some feeling of this sort that makes people shy of the whole idea of vicarious penance. But it is based on a simple confusion of thought. Of course the friend whom we want to help must become penitent in his own person; that

he may become penitent is the whole end which we have in view when we pray for him and when we do penance for him. Our penance is not substituted for his penitence, but is a way in which we try to promote it, a way which is exactly parallel to the way of prayer. When we pray, we ask that the atoning sufferings of Christ may move the sinner to penitence. When we endure pain for him, we are joining our penance to the atoning sufferings of Christ, that these atoning sufferings may thereby be brought to bear upon him and move him to penitence. We share Christ's atoning sufferings on his behalf, in order that he may come to share them on his own behalf. Thus vicarious penance is not opposed to intercessory prayer, but is exactly parallel with it. When we pray for people, we plead the merits of Christ's sufferings on their behalf, but we do not thereby impair the uniqueness or all-sufficiency of His sufferings. No one argues here: Christ's sufferings are sufficient for their forgiveness without your prayers; in adding your prayers you are suggesting their insufficiency, and presumptuously attempting to complete the completed process of Redemption. No one argues like that in the case of prayer, because in the case of prayer it is obvious that we are only using our poor efforts to bring a sinner into contact with the Saviour of mankind. We are trying to focus the merits of the one sufficient and universal sacrifice upon the case of a particular sinner. But it is just the same when we fast or afflict ourselves on behalf of others. The sufferings of Christ are recognized to be just as unique and all-sufficing when we *share* them on behalf of others as they are when we *plead* them on behalf of others; and there is no more presumption in the one

case than in the other. The simple fact is that, when we thus suffer *with special intention* for other people, or, in other words, when we offer our sufferings to God on their behalf, we become a medium through which Christ's atonement makes a special appeal to the souls of those people, so as to touch their heart, win them to repentance, and secure their pardon.

And, further, such penance done by a friend may not only move a sinner to repentance, but may also help him to persevere in it. It may help him in those terrible times of reaction from the first passion of repentance. The recurrent temptations, the defiled imagination, the darkened mind, and the enfeebled will, the sense of utter weakness and destitution, which torture the soul of the penitent, all these may, in some measure, be borne vicariously by others. Many great Saints have been allowed thus to appropriate to themselves these troubles and temptations of the penitent sinner; to share the misery which sin entails even when forgiveness has been received. So the Curé d'Ars, when consulted by a colleague as to the sort of penance to be assigned to those who had made their confession, answered, "Give them a light penance, and do a heavy one yourself on their behalf." Such penance on behalf of a sinner who has repented is easy to understand, however hard to practise; it is merely an exhibition of sympathy and fellowship which lightens his burden and encourages him to persevere. If it can actually take over part of that burden, *e.g.* the doubts or temptations which he feels, then the sympathy is keenest, and most real and practical. Thus, S. Theresa tells us of a man who had been living in mortal sin, and whom she helped to bring to repentance and confession. "He wrote to me," she con-

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tinues, "and said that he was so far improved, that he had not for some days repeated his sin; but he was so tormented by the temptation, that it seemed to him as if he were in hell already, so great were his sufferings. He asked me to pray to God for him. . . . I implored His Majesty to put an end to these torments and temptations, and to let the evil spirits torment me instead, provided I did not offend our Lord. Thus it was that for one month I was most grievously tormented."¹

And surely it is the case that the doctrine of vicarious penance ought to be somewhat easier for us at the present day than ever before. For the nature of personality is coming to be better understood. We no longer hold that one person is utterly severed from another by hard impenetrable walls of "otherness"; the walls are being broken down, or, at any rate, are becoming mere thin partitions; the influence of mind upon mind, the interpenetration of person by person, is coming to be more widely recognized. So it ought not to be a "hard saying" that the sufferings of Christ can reach the heart and conscience of one man by the road of another man's penance; that the temptations and troubles of the penitent can be shifted in large measure to the shoulders of one who sympathizes with and loves him; that the vicarious sufferings of whole communities of enclosed religious can move to repentance and sustain in penance whole multitudes of hardened sinners.

And, finally, it is hardly necessary to explain that we are not claiming extraordinary goodness for ourselves as the ground or reason of fasting or suffering for others. We do not do this on the ground that we

¹ *Life*, p. 274.

have suffered enough for our own sins, just as we do not pray for others on the ground that we are so good that we do not need to pray for ourselves. We fast and pray for others just because we love them and want to help them, whilst we know quite well that we want help ourselves. We are not concerned with the great Saints who may have suffered beyond what was necessary for their own salvation ; what we are concerned with is to feel that we ordinary people may occasionally give up luxuries, or choose hardship, on behalf of a fellow-sinner, without being presumptuous or self-righteous or advocate of "Indulgences." And it is certainly a comfort to us to feel that, in freely accepting hardship or discomfort in our work for others, we need not merely bear doggedly the pain incidental to that work, but may be humbly offering it in union with Christ's atoning sufferings, even as we offer our prayers in union with His prevailing intercession. The whole conception of suffering is thereby lifted to a higher plane.

5

Growth in religion is growth in intimacy or "homeliness" with God through Jesus Christ ; and the Cross, with all that it implies of penitence and penance, is the earliest stage in that growth. This does not mean that we must have absorbed the whole of the teaching of the Cross before learning anything else, or that penitence must be perfected before we can move on to the stage of love. Rather, the doctrine of the Cross will only be fully learnt in the context and proportion of the whole Creed ; and penitence will only be perfected under the stimulus of love. What is meant is, that

repentance is the beginning of religion, before repentance has grown into deep contrition and borne forth worthy and mature fruits, other elements of religion will have been added to it; our faith will have expanded, and our heart will have been stirred to devotion. And, in their turn, the growth of faith and love will deepen our repentance; and the deepening of repentance will advance us in our intimacy with God. Repentance is throughout the condition of our access to God! and the truer our repentance, the closer do we come to Him. And this repentance must go on all through our life; the misery of having offended God must survive as a temper of humble penitence. But at a certain stage in repentance we become aware of God's love and of the welcome which He offers us; and it is the awareness of this which changes repentance into the humble penitent longing for Him whom we had lost. I say, we *become aware* of God's love; for of course that love does not first begin to watch over us when we have become penitent. He made us because of His love, and loves us in all our sins. Repentance merely enables us to see and feel His love. Before we repent, we mis-read our hostility and contrariness against God into an anger of God against us. But God is far too great and too loving to be angry. There is anger, sulkiness, despair in our own souls, preventing us from knowing the love of God. Directly these obstacles are moved away, we feel His love in all its generosity and fullness; we have joined ourselves to Christ and the Father accepts us in the Beloved; yes, and the misery and disgrace of sin are now looked upon by our gracious and courteous Father as just so much suffering and pain for which we shall be compensated by the joy

of His presence. Once we are joined to Christ, there is no blame any more than there is any wrath in the Father's attitude towards us. The Prodigal Son is the great classical declaration of God's generous love to the sinner. Perhaps the most glowing and convincing treatment of this generous and "courteous" love of God is to be found in Mother Julian of Norwich. In her visions, she tells us, she could find no indication of "wrath in God neither for short time or for long" (chap. xlix.). "Mercy," she says, "is a sweet gracious working in love, mingled with plenteous pity. Mercy, by love, suffereth us to fail in measure, and in as much as we fail in so much we fall; and in as much as we fall, in so much we die; for it needs must be that we die in so much as we fail of the sight and feeling of God that is our life. Our failing is dreadful, our falling is shameful, and our dying is sorrowful: but in all this the sweet eye of pity and love is lifted never off us, nor the working of mercy ceaseth" (chap. xlviii.). "Mercy worketh: keeping, suffering, quickening, and healing; and all is tenderness and love. And grace worketh: raising, rewarding, endlessly overpassing that which our longing and our travail deserveth, spreading abroad and showing the high plenteous largess of God's royal Lordship in His marvellous courtesy; and this is of the abundance of love. For grace worketh our dreadful failing into plenteous endless solace; and grace worketh our shameful falling into high worshipful rising; and grace worketh our sorrowful dying into holy, blissful life" (chap. xlviii.). Our penance goes on "till what time we be fulfilled, when we shall have Him to our meed" (chap. lxxxi.). And this penance, endured "gladly and merrily for His love," will itself be re-

warded hereafter. "Though the soul be healed, his wounds are seen afore God,—not as wounds but as worships. And so on the contrariwise, as we be punished here with sorrow and penance, we shall be rewarded in heaven by the courteous love of our Lord God Almighty, who willeth that none that come there lose his travail in any degree. For He beholdeth sin as sorrow and pain to His lovers, to whom He assigneth no blame, for love. The meed that we shall receive shall not be little, but it shall be high, glorious, and worshipful. And so shall shame be turned to worship and more joy" (chap. xlix.). And the excellence of God's love and courtesy by no means implies any minimising of sin. "Sin is the sharpest scourge that any chosen soul may be smitten with: which scourge thoroughly beateth man and woman, and maketh him hateful in his own sight, so far forth that afterwhile he thinketh himself he is not worthy but as to sink in hell,—till contrition taketh him by touching of the Holy Ghost, and turneth his bitterness into hopes of God's mercy" (chap. xxxix.). The measure of sin is seen in the anguish of the Passion of the Saviour. That Passion is caused by our sin, and is our rescue from sin. But man's true nature is grounded in God; and by the indwelling of the Saviour in our bodily nature the body is united to the soul, and the whole becomes, through our union with Him, acceptable and precious in God's sight.

The New Life then springs from the ashes of the old one. It is grounded on fellowship with Christ Crucified, a fellowship in which the old life is gradually killed, and in which God's love is gradually manifested. Fellowship with Christ's Passion, the killing of self-love, experience of God's favour and

goodness towards us, all these go together and are parts of one uplifting process. And a chief characteristic of the New Life is, that it is theocentric, *i.e.* that it revolves round God as its centre. And this is one of those things which are easy to state and desperately difficult to achieve, and which can only be done by a complete convulsion and upheaval in our way of looking at things. At first we are absolutely self-centred, and also self-reliant. It is *our* interests that have to be provided for ; and it is our strength and cleverness that will provide for them. Then a second stage arrives, in which we are self-centred, but not quite self-reliant. At certain times and in certain circumstances we feel a need of God, who will help us to bear a particular misfortune or conquer a particular sin or carry through a particular bit of work. God is called in, in order that the respectability and decorum of our life may be maintained ; that our self-respect may not be besmirched with disgrace ; that our religious or philanthropic work may be carried forward to success and redound duly to our credit. God is to revolve diligently round us, supply certain needs, and illuminate our piety and good works in the eyes of our fellow-men. If our fallen race had retained more of a saving sense of humour, we should appreciate better the utter absurdity and topsy-turveydom of such a relationship, in which God is recognised indeed as our Lord and Master, but is practically asked to do nothing but minister to our own pride and self-esteem. The work for which we occasionally ask God's help, is *ours* : we have chosen it ; we are sure that it is good and that God will feel great pleasure in helping us to carry it out. And it may be perfectly true that the work is good, and necessary, and useful, whether it consists

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in improving ourselves or in helping others ; and, further, there may be progress and development in our conception of it, and also in the zeal and assiduity with which we devote ourselves to it. But it is no less true, that the old astronomy is still dominant, and that we ourselves are still the centre of the system. We have got indeed beyond the earliest stage of all, in which we loved ourselves exclusively and self-confidently, as though we had no need of anything. Now we are beginning to love God ; but we are loving Him just for the help and approval that He can give us ; God is the means and we are the end ; our own small earthly self is still the centre of the universe.

But when the principle of self-love is killed, and when, through the Cross, we have arrived at the experience of God's love, the grand revolution of thought and feeling is at last effected. God is now the centre, and we are circling round him, owing all our light to Him, offering ourselves as instruments in His work, and joining in the song of praise which is the music of the universe and its tribute to its Maker. God is the end and we are the means ; we love ourselves for God's sake, as an offering of praise and thanksgiving made to Him, as instruments to be used by Him in the doing of His will. And the revolution spreads all through our being. Feelings which had been instruments and vehicles of self-love and, as such, had wrought nothing but shame and corruption and wretchedness, are directed to God and become vehicles of life and love. Our desires, which had been cruel and lustful, are directed now to a goal of purity and peace ; our ambition, which was a craving for personal recognition and for the satisfaction of personal vanity, is now craving for the recognition

of Christ by all men and for the greater glory of His name ; our old anger and impatience at obstacles to our acts of self-assertion are now hurled against the obstacles that keep God from us ; the hatred that used to be felt for our rivals and our betters is now for ourselves and the faithlessness and futility of our lives.

This is the miracle of the Cross ; it has revolutionised our being ; it has killed self-love and substituted the love of God ; it has crucified us, and opened our hearts to a new life, which is the life of Christ in us. Christ has become our dominant self, so that self-love has been transformed into the love of Christ. All the passion, the reason, the energy of our nature have passed through the gate of death, and have emerged as instruments of a self dedicated to God's service through union with His blessed Son.

And it may be noted in passing that this merging of the self in Christ is the one way in which it seems possible to combine energy of action with humbleness of heart. It is easy enough to find any amount of energy and enthusiasm devoted to action of which the motive is self-assertion and self-display, action in which the man is obviously playing to a gallery and working for applause. And it is obvious that the general character of such a motive is the same, whatever form the self-display may take, and whoever may be the occupants of the gallery whose applause is sought ; whether we are displaying our new clothes before the crowd in the street, or displaying an unobtrusive heroism before the one friend whose judgment we respect. Mr. M'Dougall¹ argues that a

¹ *Social Psychology*, pp. 256-7. I should like to express my deep indebtedness to this most interesting book, especially in regard to its insistence on the importance of instinct in human action.

refined self-display is the highest motive of human action, and that a man may be actuated by it without being a prig. Leaving Christianity on the one side, the former contention may be admitted ; but the latter is a contradiction in terms. We can form, indeed, a clear and consistent idea of a particular type of action, if we regard it as conducted with energy, actuated by self-display, and revealing a general attitude to self for which priggishness is the most obvious name. On the other hand, we can recognize a line of conduct of which the motive is humility and the characteristics are self-distrust, hatred of responsibility, passivity, and inaction. Such action as the man does take is taken to secure retirement ; the motive may be deep and genuine humility, but the character is ineffective and seems to lack all energy and initiative ; let us in fairness apply to him as hard a name as to the opposite type, and describe him as a sluggard. So the problem (and it is an enormously important one for all who wish well to human nature) is this : Can the sluggard become energetic without losing his humility and approximating to the prig ? Can the prig, again, attain humility without forfeiting his energy and sinking to the inertia of the sluggard ? My own answer is that this can only be done by a miracle, and that it is done by what I have called the miracle of the Cross. The man who has killed the old principle of self-assertion and self-display and has gained a new principle in the indwelling life of Christ ; the man who has died with Christ on the Cross and found a new life hidden with Him in God ; the man who, by penitence and love, has effectively joined himself to Christ and become " one spirit " with Him—such a man will combine a temper of pro-

foundest humility with a fiery zeal for the glory of Christ with whom he has become joined, united, identified. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me"—that is the one solution of the problem of human action; and the fact that it is so has always worked, consciously or subconsciously, is a supremely strong argument for Christianity. "That is all mysticism and sacramentalism," it will be said. Yes; and if mysticism and sacramentalism are necessary to make a decent job of human nature, that is just an argument, one of many, in their favour.

6

Mortification has been thought of as that which has placed us in our right relation to God. By killing self-love we perceive God as the centre of our universe, and set ourselves to do the work which He inspires us to do, not that which we choose for ourselves. But it is equally true that only when we have thus recognized and taken up our right relation to God, can mortification be completed. The waiting upon God, the listening for His call, the readiness to do His work, and to do it with pure intention for His glory, this is the completion of mortification.

All spiritual states overlap and interpenetrate each other; and so it is with these two conditions, the *killing of self-love* and the *rising to the love of God*. By beginning to despise and hate our narrow and corrupt self we lift up our souls to God; and, lifting up our souls to Him, we come to hate self with a more deadly hatred. Thus mortification and the love of God help each other; and in their higher stages are practically synonymous; love of self can only be

really killed when the love of God takes its place; and we can only love God truly when the love of self is dead. What *we* are familiar with is the incomplete development, the stage at which we are hating sin or self-love without having killed it, and setting our minds and hearts on God without having achieved a perfect love of Him. At this stage we know and love Him sufficiently to find in Him a fortress of strength against temptation, of peace amidst troubles, of confidence in times of dryness and despondency. And this love that we have for God at once becomes an aid to mortification. When our hearts are thus lifted towards God, the crosses and slights and contradictions which meet us every day are accepted by us as part of our penance for our sin, and as helps towards the destruction of our pride. If we were not beginning to love God, these same annoyances and contradictions would have merely exasperated us and have aroused in us a fresh passion of self-assertion by which our pride should yet be made to prevail. But now by God's grace and by our dawning love for Him, these crosses become means of mortification; they just confirm our bad opinion of ourselves, and make us feel that in us, apart from God, there dwells no good thing, and that kickings and contempt are just what we deserve. When a French priest, who loved God, was insulted by a colleague who wrote, "How can an ignoramus like you dare to hear confessions?" the contempt just served to stimulate him to greater humility. He replied at once, "How I ought to love you, my very dear and highly venerated brother! You are the only one who has really known me—Help me to gain the favour which I have been imploring for so long, that being removed from a position which I am not fit to hold

by reason of my ignorance, I may be allowed to retire to some little corner and there bewail my poor life." Thus love for God and an appreciation of His greatness will help us to recognize our littleness and to kill the sins which keep us from Him. And, on the other hand, as our struggle against sin grows more earnest, we come to take refuge more quickly and to dwell more habitually in the fortress of the love of God ; as we become more able to turn from the voice of temptation, we come to hang more upon the voice of God and to be more ready to do His will. So our love of God helps us to grow in the power of mortification ; and this growth in mortification helps us to turn more whole-heartedly to the love of God. A ready obedience to God's inspirations and guidance, with a pure intention of His glory in such obedience, may be called indifferently perfect mortification or a perfect love of God.

Now the considerations with which we have been dealing have important results for Prayer. If God is really the centre of our system and Christ the very life of our soul, prayer will become something very different from what it was before. God Himself will be the beginning, the middle, and the end of all our prayers. The prayer will be inspired by God ; it will be founded on some attribute of God ; it will be addressed to God ; that which we ask for will be God ; it will be for God's sake that we ask it. God Himself will be the very life and substance of our prayer. Prayer will be just the lifting up of the heart to Him as a response to His invitation, as a meditation upon His goodness, as a request for more of His presence, as a pleading of the merits of His Son. Sometimes these several parts or aspects of the

prayer will be unfolded one by one in explicit form ; sometimes they will interpenetrate each other in one complex act of silent adoration. This is just the difference between vocal and spiritual prayer. In the former, the ground and the object of the petition, and the medium through which it is offered, are all set out separately as distinct from Him to whom it is offered ; in the latter the folds of the prayer are not unwrapped, but it is presented as a whole to God. It does not make much difference which method we adopt. It is easy to see how, in an explicit oral prayer, it is really God who appears and reappears in the several parts which make it up. Take for instance the Collect for the Sixth Sunday after Trinity : " O God, who hast prepared for them that love Thee such good things as pass man's understanding ; Pour into our hearts such love towards Thee, that we, loving Thee above all things, may obtain Thy promises, which exceed all that we can desire ; through Jesus Christ our Lord." Here the prayer is addressed to God ; God's goodness is the ground on which it is based ; the object asked for is God here and hereafter ; and God Incarnate is the medium through which it is offered.

And it is very much the same in the Collect for the very next Sunday, the 7th after Trinity : " Lord of all power and might, who art the author and giver of all good things ; graft in our hearts the love of Thy Name, increase in us true religion, nourish us with all goodness, and of Thy great mercy keep us in the same ; through Jesus Christ our Lord." God's love in giving us good things is the ground on which the prayer is built ; the object asked for is love and goodness ; and it is asked for in the Name in which

goodness and love are perfectly expressed. The whole substance of the prayer would be equally well expressed if we were to fix our minds on the good and loving God with a silent yearning for a deeper and closer fellowship with Him. This must, indeed, be the prevailing and dominant intention of prayer when once we are determined to kill self-love and self-assertion. We must not kill them in action and revive them in prayer. To announce to God that we require and insist on having certain things, and that we want Him to help us to get them, would be to go back to the old astronomy and make God revolve round us.

This does not mean that we are not to ask for particular things ; but it does mean that (God Himself is the atmosphere and background of every prayer ; the absence of the appropriate atmosphere and background makes bad religion in the matter of prayer, as it makes bad art in a picture. But we must go further and say that God is not only the atmosphere or background but also the ultimate and comprehensive object of every petition. He is the sum total of all goods, the common source of all blessings, whether for body, soul, or spirit. So, when we ask for a particular thing, we ask for it as a manifestation of God's goodness and as a means by which we and others may be brought into closer communion with His love. We pray to Him as the Father who loves to give good things to His children and thereby to strengthen them in their service of Him and in their love of Him. But His purposes for us, and His knowledge of the ways in which we can best serve and love Him go infinitely beyond our own limited comprehension. In our particular prayers we fix on

a particular way in which God may manifest His goodness towards us, and in which we may be helped to serve and love Him; but God Himself in His plenitude of love and wisdom is there in the background and it is He for whom we are praying, as well as to whom we are praying—"God, who art goodness, give me Thyself for Thy goodness' sake," must be the spirit of every prayer.

And there is a further point, which I think it will be useful for us to remember. God will often make known to us the blessing which will be best for us or others, which He wants to give us, and will give us when we pray for it. These words were brought to Julian's mind in one of the revelations made to her, "I am ground of thy beseeching: first it is My will that thou have it; and after, I make thee to will it; and after, I make thee to beseech it and thou beseechest it. How should it be that thou shouldest not have thy beseeching? (p. 84) "He beholdeth us in love," she explains, "and therefore He stirreth us to pray for that which it pleaseth Him to do. For which prayer and good will, which we have of His gift, He will reward us and give us endless meed." (p. 90).

What we have to do, then, is to wait ever upon God, with an open and teachable mind, for indication of His particular purpose at each particular time; then we can pray with all our hearts for that particular thing, knowing that God wills to give it, and wills us to pray for it; yes, and will give it in fuller measure in proportion to the earnestness of our prayer. And to perceive these indications of His will, it is necessary for us to clear our minds of prejudices and preconceptions as to what *must* be God's will, and to be ready

to learn from Him what it is. This waiting upon God is the preparation for prayer; it is the temper of prayer, the attitude of prayer; nay, it is prayer itself. And we shall not, of course, think that when God has made known His particular will, there is no reason for us to pray. God may be longing to give us the blessing we need; and yet, out of respect for the freedom with which He has endowed us, may wait till the prayer which He inspires actually goes up from our heart to Him. His gracious hands may be lifted up to bless; but the blessing waits upon our prayer.

And I think we have here the solution of a difficulty we often feel in the matter of prayer for particular things, *e.g.* for the recovery of a sick person. If our minds are really open and attentive upon God, may He not show us what His will is in the particular case? It may be that He will tell us that His will is that the person should recover; and yet the recovery, like other blessings, may be dependent on our prayer. In such a case there will be no limit to the directness, particularity, and urgency of our entreaties. He may, again, show us that His will is the patient endurance of suffering and death; and then, too, we know what to pray for with equal earnestness and insistence.

This discernment of God's will seems to have been habitual in certain saints. For instance, many miracles of healing are related of S. Philip Neri, but sometimes he abstained from any attempt to heal and from any word of hope and encouragement as to recovery, and that in cases which would have appeared outwardly most suitable for such action. Thus we are told of a young man named Gabriele Tana, "who had been

for some time a most dear disciple and penitent of Philip"—a young man who was an excellent Christian, charitable, pious, and chaste: "Now it happened," the biographer proceeds, "that he fell sick, and Philip knew supernaturally that this sickness of the young man was unto death. He lamented the fact in his heart, and set himself to help him as much as he could in his passage from this world." And then follows the touching story how the saint had to moderate first the patient's eager desire to recover, and then his equally eager desire to die at once and be with Christ; and to teach him absolute reliance on God's will.¹ Must we not believe that the Apostles and others had similar intimations of God's will? The number of sick people they came across must have enormously exceeded the number that they set themselves to heal, and surely it must have been a discernment of God's will which prompted them when to do so and when to forbear.

Or, again, such discernment of God's will may be given indirectly, through the ability or disability which we experience in offering our prayers. This was the case with S. Philip's exact contemporary S. Teresa.² She says, "However much I may wish to pray for those graces which our Lord sees not to be expedient, I cannot do it; and if I try, I do so with little earnestness, force, and spirit; it is impossible to do more even if I would. But it is not so as to those which His Majesty intends to grant. These I can pray for constantly, and with great importunity; though I do not carry them in my memory, they seem to present themselves to me at once. There is a great differ-

¹ Capecehatro, *Vita di S. Filippo Neri*, vol. i. p. 335.

² They were both born in A.D. 1515.

ence between these two ways of praying, and I know not how to explain it. As to the first, when I pray for those graces which our Lord does not mean to grant, I am like one whose tongue is tied; who, though he would speak, yet cannot; or, if he speaks, sees that people do not listen to him. . . . In the second case I am like one who speaks clearly and intelligibly to another, whom he sees to be a willing listener.”¹

In the absence of any such indication of His will, we shall do well to make God Himself in His comprehensive goodness the object of our petition for the sick, rather than a particular manifestation of that goodness. We shall pray that God will reveal His goodness to the sick man, will draw him to His love and service in whatever way seems good to Him who is very goodness.

God may will sometimes that sick people shall be healed by laying on of hands or by anointing; but we must not assume that this is His will in every case of sickness; and unless it is made known to us spiritually that it is His will in a particular case, the humbler and more trustful course is to help to bring God to the sick man, as his satisfaction and his exceeding great reward, without dogmatizing as to ways in which this blessing will be manifested. The prayer in our First Prayer Book's Service for the Anointing of the Sick seems to give us very well the spirit which I have in view. So, then, when we have made God the centre of our lives, our prayer will always be a prayer for God Himself; that God's Name may be glorified and His Will be done in that way in which He sees to be the best. And as we purify our own hearts from all presumption and self-will, we may

¹ *Life of S. Theresa*, by herself (translated by David Lewis), p. 373.

hope to catch the whisper of His voice telling us what it is that He wills in any particular case with which we have to deal.

The Cross, then, frankly accepted as the introduction to religion, brings with it a new attitude to prayer; an attitude which makes God "the thing prayed for" as well as the Person to whom the prayer is addressed; every particular request being, ultimately, a request for a particular mode of union with Him or a particular manifestation of His love. And we have seen that the Cross does something else. It purges the spiritual vision and opens the spiritual ear, and so gives to the purest hearts a capacity of discerning from time to time what is the particular way in which God wills to manifest His love and draw His children nearer to Himself.

7

And now we turn to the Cross in its relation to the Holy Eucharist. And here we find that the relationship is essential and inseparable. Whilst the acceptance of the Cross yields a truer and better conception of prayer, it is necessary to *any* true conception of the Eucharist. It is the fundamental root-idea of the Eucharist itself. As a Sacrifice, the Eucharist makes the death of Christ a constant and enduring reality, and pleads perpetually the merits of that death for our forgiveness. But, as we have seen, the propitiatory power of His death depends on its being shared by ourselves. This is obvious, and does not require to be further insisted upon. But what does need emphasizing is the connexion of His death with our reception of the Sacrament. (1) It is from the side of His

death, through the avenue of His Passion, that He gives Himself as our food. "This is My Body." "This is My Blood of the new covenant which is being shed for you." It is the Body broken on the Cross, the Blood poured out on the Cross, which is to be the nourishment of our spiritual life. And (2) the Sacred Humanity, thus given to us is not carnal, but spiritual; it is a Sacred Humanity which has passed through death, and has been exalted and glorified at the right hand of the Father.

It is the union of these two truths which makes up the whole power and significance of Holy Communion. The first truth demands contrition and mortification on our part, if we are to receive profitably that broken Body and outpoured Blood. The second truth guarantees a union with the ascended Christ, and all that is implied therein, to each contrite and mortified recipient; a union closer and completer in proportion to the thoroughness of that mortification and contrition. Holy Communion requires a death of self-love, and offers a new life of union with God, all in one action. It "killeth, and maketh alive; it bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up; it maketh poor, and maketh rich; it bringeth low, and lifteth up; it raiseth the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set him among princes, and to make him inherit the throne of glory."¹ But we must first accept the dunghill of humiliation and the grave of mortification, if we are to be lifted up and made to inherit the throne of glory through union with the risen and exalted Christ.

(i.) First, then, the Holy Eucharist is an instrument of death. It presents Christ to us as the victim,

¹ 1 Sam. ii, 6-8.

“ the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world ” ; whose death, that is, had been foreordained in the hidden purposes of the eternal Father for our salvation. The occasion of its institution, the words used by Christ, the separate consecration of the Body and the Blood by the priest, make this quite clear. It is true that the death is past and over ; that “ Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more ” ; but it is none the less true that the eternity of Christ’s own nature gives not only an eternal significance, but also an eternal reality, an abiding existence, to every phase of that human life which was taken up into God. In us, each successive phase of life is a stepping-stone towards some later development or higher perfection ; but in Christ each phase is perfect in itself ; each, by being united to the eternal Godhead, is taken out of the “ wheel of becoming ” and made an eternal fact, alive with its own eternal power for the souls of men. His childhood was not an immature manhood, but an apotheosis of childhood, which, in being experienced by the Eternal, becomes itself an eternal fact, with a vital and transforming and uplifting energy of its own, communicable to all children to the end of time. And so His death was not the final phase of an earthly life ; it is lifted into the sphere of the unchanging, and is an everlasting fact. These abiding facts, imbedded and set like jewels in the crown of His eternity, can each be invoked and appropriated by us in our various needs and occasions. In the Holy Eucharist it is His death on which our minds are primarily focused. And we appropriate it by sharing it. Some real effort after mortification is the condition of a worthy reception of the Sacrament : “ Ye that do truly and earnestly repent you of your sins . . . draw near with

faith and take this Holy Sacrament to your comfort." Our penitence or mortification is our avenue of approach to that eternal fact, with all the merits and benefits which it contains. But there is another relationship between our penitence and the Divine Victim whom we receive. Our penitence not only enables us to draw near and receive, but it is itself strengthened by that reception. We feed ourselves on Christ's sufferings, and thereby become more capable of suffering with Him. The abiding reality of the "Body being broken and the Blood being poured out," in which His sufferings for us were consummated, is to be the nourishment of our own spiritual life. Our penitence is not to be just a passing step, fitting us for Communion, and then discarded because its work is done; it is something which is to grow deeper and stronger, healthier and more vital, in consequence of our Communion. Penitence is to become gradually the dominant passion, the ruling principle of our life: a passion and a principle which are themselves fed and nourished by the Body and Blood of Christ. So far from coming to Christ in His Sacrament in order that we may be spared suffering, we come in order that our suffering may be intenser and more keenly felt; that it may be a suffering "unto death," unto the utter mortification of the whole principle of sin. Only when this is being really done, can the other aspect or power of the Eucharist be manifested and exerted. Only when we are really bearing about in ourselves the dying of Jesus, can the life of Jesus be manifested in us. Only when mortification has been so deepened as to become a veritable death in life, can the Eucharist become a renovating principle of *life through death*. It is Christ in His human life

of poverty, contempt, and suffering, through whom we get access to the Divine. Poverty, contempt, and suffering are the principal contents of that "Book of Life" which is Jesus Christ; they are the "sweet gifts of God; and whosoever doth fully obtain them may know himself to be perfected and consummated in the most sweet God, Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ to be perfected in him through transformation."¹ "Poverty, contempt, and suffering made up the bitter penance which Christ did for us";² they are the companions who did accompany Him during the whole of His life in order to furnish an example unto us, that we may choose, love, and endure these same companions until we die. For this is the way whereby the soul must reach unto God, and other direct road is there none. Needful is it, therefore, and seemly that the members of the body should follow the same road which had been taken by the head, and that the same companions which had accompanied the head should likewise accompany the members." ■

The reason why we do not come nearer to God is that we do not keep to this "direct road," the King's highway of the Cross; and, in particular, the reason why our Communion do not do us more good is that we forget that each Communion is primarily and necessarily a feeding upon the sufferings of Christ, by which our own penitence is nourished, and our will strengthened to do acts of penance.

(ii.) But Holy Communion in uniting us to Christ as the Sacrificial Victim is uniting us to Him in all the plenitude of His being. His sufferings and death

¹ *Blessed Angela of Foligno* (Mediæval Library), p. 143.

² *Ib.*, p. 54.

are a perpetual reality, eternalized through their occurrence in the life of the Eternal ; but they are not the whole reality. The sufferings exist for ever alongside of the glorification ; and all alike have their context and interconnexion in the changeless eternity of God the Son. Therefore, by entering into sacramental communion with His sufferings, we are also entering into communion with His exalted life, and are made partakers of the Divine nature of the Eternal Son. His sufferings are, as we have insisted all along, the point at which alone we can have immediate contact with Him, since it is in His sufferings that He is on the level of us sinners. Calvary, with its anguish and nakedness and dereliction, is the place where He meets us and unites us to Himself without barrier or impediment ; and it is from the side of Gethsemane and Calvary that He gives Himself to us in the Eucharist. But when once we have received Him thus, we possess Him in His wholeness. All the other glorious realities which belong to the Son of God are designed for us. His Sacramental Presence is not only a stimulus to repentance, but also a power of perfect holiness ; He is the end as well as the beginning ; He is the goal of our pilgrimage as well as our encouragement in beginning it ; He is our victory over sin as well as the reinforcement of our early struggles against it. Once we lay hold of Him with contrite hearts, we are at once in the far-off country, the dwelling-place of the High and Holy One ; once He is with us in our storm-tossed boat, the storm ceases and the boat is at the shore. In the presence of Christ, that which is perfect is come ; partial conceptions, partial efforts, partial revelations, are all gathered up into Him as the one substantial reality

of sanctity and truth. All that belongs to Him is destined for us who have penitently received Him in His sufferings; they are ours; we have but to invoke them and trust them, and they will exert their transforming and exalting power. A radiant company of virtues and powers marshal themselves around the Eucharist, ready to enter into our souls in the very act of communion. First come the graces and merits of the Cross itself: the pardon, the love, the self-sacrifice, the perfect obedience, the untarnished Sonship which dwelt in the soul of the Crucified and found utterance through His lips. Then follow all the virtues of the Incarnate life which was consummated in the Passion; then the power of the Resurrection; the glory of the Ascension; the indwelling of the Spirit sent from heaven; the ineffable grace and blessedness of Communion with God the Three in One. Corpus Christi reminds us how all these things are ours in the Eucharist. All these things come to the penitent communicant who has joined his own penance and repentance to Christ's sufferings and received Him in His death. The only thing he has to do is to open the gates of his soul to admit these glorious guests; or, rather, since they *have* entered in the train of the Eucharist, he has but to bid them welcome, converse with them, unite them to himself, and use them. We could not have a better exercise for Meditation than to dwell first on one and then on another of these stupendous realities which are already ours, and thereby enable them to exercise their beneficent power on our soul. For they cannot do this unless we ask them to do it, by bringing our hearts and wills for them to bless and sanctify.

All of them—the innocence of the holy Childhood,

the graces of the ministerial Life, the virtues of the Passion, the triumph and glory of the Resurrection and Ascension, all are there, contained within the narrow compass of the consecrated Host. When we have received That, we have received them all, and can count over our treasures lovingly, and comprehend our wealth, and use it. "For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not also with Him freely give us all things?"¹

8

Through the Cross to eternal life; through penitence to union with God by love and knowledge; that is the path of the Christian. Eternal life, communion with God, that is the goal of a soul made in God's image and unable to rest in anything short of God. And penitence in its earliest phase is just the misery of a destitute soul crying after the God whom it has lost; as it develops, it becomes a purer grief at having sinned against Him and a resolute endeavour to recover Him. And the penitential suffering is caught up into union with the afflictions of Christ which in their height, depth, length, and breadth go utterly beyond our power of comprehension. Linked with these ineffable sufferings of Christ, it is accounted perfect in the eyes of the Father, and so wins our forgiveness. And the Saviour whose sufferings have made our penitence acceptable to God, by the same generous love makes it a means of communion with

¹ Rom. v. 10, viii. 32.

Himself ; because we are penitent, the Body broken and the Blood shed for our forgiveness are given to be our food. The same unimaginable love which comes down to meet our poor penitence and receive it into partnership with His own atoning sufferings, also comes down to feed it with His very nature which suffered for us. He who magnified and transformed our penitence by associating it with His vicarious sufferings, now feeds it with those sufferings, which thereby cease to be vicarious, since they are in some measure assimilated and experienced by ourselves. In fact, Christ's sufferings become less and less vicarious as we grow up into them ourselves. Wholly vicarious they never were. There must be at the outset some real repentance, however poor, thin, and adulterated, to be taken up into union with His afflictions. And now this repentance, thus clothed with an ideal significance, has to realize the ideal by feeding upon those sufferings, and so entering into a fuller fellowship with them. The process of the Passion, with the agony, the betrayal, the rejection, the scourging, the mockery, and the dying, ceases to be a mere self-imposed martyrdom which Christ endured in our stead ; it is also that which our repentance is coming to be, as those sufferings of Christ are endured by us who feed upon His Body and Blood. Another's sufferings become sufferings of our own ; an external transaction becomes an inward experience ; a past fact becomes a present reality ; faith in Christ becomes fellowship with Christ ; our sinful nature itself suffers what itself deserves—namely, to be condemned, spat upon, scorned, scourged, and crucified.

And as the Christ who suffered is also the risen

and exalted Christ, we pass upwards with Him, are made partakers of His Divine nature, have eternal life, ascend in heart and mind with Him, and with Him continually dwell even in this present life. And so, as I said, Christ in the Eucharist casts us down and lifts us up, as we drink faithfully of the bitter cup of His Passion, and through union with His sufferings are filled with the life and power and hope of His Divine and risen life.

Thus there are three stages in penitence. To begin with, we must do our part, must offer the utmost to which we can rise in the way of repentance; then this offering of ours will be taken up into the perfect redemptive offering of Christ's sufferings, and, lastly, this perfect offering is given to be our food, and thereby develop and perfect our own repentance. We may apply to it the words of S. Augustine, "*Cibus sum grandium; cresce, et manducabis Me.*" ("I am the food of the full-grown; be a man, and thou shalt eat Me.") We must first repent to the utmost of our manhood's power; then we shall feed on Christ's sufferings, and thereby grow to a greater penitence than we could of ourselves attain to.

I have said much of penitence, and very little in comparison of that to which the penitence is preparatory, and with which it is interpenetrated—namely, the bliss of communion with the risen Christ. I have done this on purpose. We are always being tempted to give less than its due place to penitence, to dwarf and shorten it in the perspective of the Christian life; we are always wanting to do what Christ refused to do—to come down from the Cross before our death is consummated. And, again, penitence ought not

only to be deeper and more thorough than it is; also, in the guise of a chastened and sober humility it must continue to the very end of our lives. But, on the other hand, there need not be, and ought not to be, anything gloomy and morose about it. On the contrary, the true penitent is the happiest and most light-hearted person in the world. He must be so, because he is the friend of Christ. His intimacy with Christ is founded on fellowship with Christ's sufferings; but for that very reason it has become also an intimacy with Christ glorified; and this friendship with Christ is his happiness in this life and the pledge of a fuller happiness beyond. "The happiness of this life," says Father Baker, "consists in such union as may be had in this life; the happiness of the future lies in the union which is proper to that life, and is the perfect, consummate, and supreme happiness of the soul."¹

So far as we have a real union or intimacy with Christ in this life there will be a real measure of happiness here; when that union or intimacy is perfected in heaven, the happiness will be perfected too.

The Saints were the bosom friends of Christ; they are the people who attained the greatest degree of intimacy with Him in their earthly life, and we find consequently that their lives were happier than those of the rest of the world. But we shall better understand how this came about with them, and how it may also come about with us, if we just notice two other qualities which seem to lead up to this supreme happiness. The first of these is *Freedom*—freedom from the bondage to worldly and carnal lusts which makes happiness impossible. Freedom is a necessary

¹ *Life of Dame Gertrude More*, p. 182.

condition of happiness ; and the friends of Christ, who have taken up His light burden and easy yoke, are above all things free men. "I will walk at liberty," says the Psalmist, "for I seek Thy commandments." By accepting God's law we escape the tyranny of inordinate desires. "Great is the peace that they have who love Thy law : and they are not offended at it." For such people, the rival tyrannical desires gradually lose their power and attraction. The soul still cleaves at times to the dust, and is troubled above measure, and is a mark for the derision of the proud and the snares of the ungodly. But the quickening power of God is at work. His testimonies are the very joy of their heart ; and they take up a new attitude to the sin of the world : "Through Thy commandments I get understanding : therefore I hate all evil ways." "I am horribly afraid for the ungodly that forsake Thy law." "Mine eyes gush out with water because men keep not Thy law." And as freedom results from keeping God's commandments, so, on the other hand, when it is full-grown, it will enable us to keep them more perfectly : "I will run the way of Thy commandments, when Thou hast set my heart at liberty."

"He that committeth sin is the servant of sin." And, as the servants of sin, we belong to a corrupt, perishing, death-stricken world—"the servant abideth not in the house for ever"—a world of envy, hatred, uncharitableness, lust, ambition, self-glorification, and discontent ; a world which, if it possesses little permanence, possesses still less of peace or liberty. But through the power of our intimacy with Christ we have escaped from this narrow, transitory, slavish existence ; the snare is broken, and we are delivered ;

the Son, who abideth for ever, has made us free, and we are free indeed. Such freedom is a very important ingredient in a Christian's happiness.

And another characteristic of the life of God's friends, which also conduces to their happiness, is its *simpli-*
city. This follows, indeed, from their freedom. Being delivered from the bondage to worldly and carnal lusts, they can concentrate their minds on God as the one object of their love and service. And this devotion to one supreme object will unify their whole nature, and abolish the discord and schism between its higher and lower elements. The clear, distinct vision of the soul, focused upon God, will be like a lamp shining in the dark places of the lower nature. The light, remaining distinct, and uncompounded or unalloyed, will spread throughout the whole of the man's nature, leaving no part in darkness.¹ The lower elements will be transfigured by the light of the spirit, and will be brought into order and harmony with the spirit. But when the inner eye of the spirit loses its simple, uncompounded nature, and becomes itself alloyed with passion, there will be no illumination of the "sensuality," which in itself is the natural sphere of darkness. If the light becomes darkened through being alloyed with passion, how completely devoid of light will the sphere of passion itself be!

Where, then, the light of the spirit, derived from God, is turned to God as the one true reality, and preserved from the corruption of passion, it will illuminate the whole of our nature, and give it unity and simplicity. There will be no shilly-shallying or compromises between rival and competing claims of soul and body, but a single harmonious nature, in

¹ S. Luke xi. 36.

which the passions are purified and the reason guided by the spirit ; and this simple, unified, harmonious nature will be directed to God, with all its forces and capacities.

Thus in the eternal life of intimacy with God we find not only freedom from the tyranny of passion, but, further, the purification of the sphere of passion, and its co-operation with the spirit in the simplicity of a life devoted entirely to God. The body is directed by the soul, and the soul is directed by God. And then, when we have a nature which is not only freed from sin, but unified in all its parts and simply and whole-heartedly turned to God, happiness at once results. When Christ has delivered His friends from bondage to sin, and has united the whole of their being, body and soul, in allegiance to Himself, then they feel they can rest and be satisfied ; they have real joy and happiness.

Let us take an example. S. Philip Neri was a conspicuous example of this joy ; and we have a definition of it put into his mouth by the Bishop of Verona in a dialogue called " Philip, or Christian Joy," which is quoted in the second volume of S. Philip's Life (p. 404). After different characters in the dialogue have given their views on its nature, S. Philip is called upon to speak. He said, " Internal Christian joy is a gift of God, grounded on a good conscience ; it flows from a contempt of worldly things united to a contemplation of heavenly things." In commenting on this definition, given by himself, he remarks that " joy is maintained by meditating upon death, by friendly intercourse with holy and learned men, by frequenting the Sacraments, by watchfulness over ourselves, by doing good to our neighbour ; and it is increased by

continual prayer to God, combined with devotion to the Saints. . . . The ultimate end of our joy is that it may ever increase, until it becomes at last eternal gladness in our heavenly country, the home of peace and ineffable bliss." And, in conclusion, he reminds his hearers that "whoever is the servant of sin cannot even taste it"; and that "its principal foes are ambition, sensuality, vanity, and malevolence." The last words clearly imply that the mortification of self-seeking must go before the attainment of joy; or, in other words, that happiness comes just to those who have ceased to seek it. As long as we hunt for joy, pleasure, happiness, success, with a fretful insistence on our rights and claims, we shall never find them. But when we have freed ourselves from the tyranny of such desires and set our affections simply and entirely upon God, then these "other things" are added to us; "good measure, pressed down, and running over," they pour in upon us. And this is very natural. Joy is the sense of satisfaction in something created or achieved,¹ as when the sons of God shouted for joy at the finished work of creation; it is the sense of having done or got what we wanted, and it is in the possession of God that this want is finally supplied.

So if freedom from self-will leads to simplicity, we find also that simplicity leads to joy. The soul which has fixed its gaze clearly and unfalteringly upon God, and has unified its whole nature in loyal subjection to Him, will "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."² The 119th Psalm, which expresses our experiences with such marvellous insight, expresses

¹ Cf. Bergson, article in *Hibbert Journal*, October 1911.

² 1 S., Peter i., 8.

this too : “ I have had as great delight in the way of Thy testimonies, as in all manner of riches.” “ O how sweet are Thy words unto my throat : yea, sweeter than honey unto my mouth.” “ I opened my mouth and drew in my breath : for my delight was in Thy commandments.” “ Thy testimonies have I claimed as mine heritage for ever : and why ? they are the very joy of my heart.”

V

CHRISTIANITY AS MYSTERY-CULT

1. GREEK AND ORIENTAL MYSTERIES.
2. INDEPENDENT DEVELOPMENT OF CHRISTIAN WORSHIP.
3. RESEMBLANCES IN TERMINOLOGY AND RITUAL BETWEEN
CHRISTIAN AND PAGAN CULTS.
4. DISTINCTIVE CHARACTER OF CHRISTIAN SACRAMENTS, AND
THEIR POSITION IN THE CHRISTIAN REVELATION.

V

CHRISTIANITY AS MYSTERY-CULT

PERSONAL Communion with Christ comes, for us sinners, "through the Cross"; and the power of the Cross finds its simplest, most intelligible, and most enduring vehicle in the Sacrament of Holy Communion. The Sacraments are vehicles of a divine life, channels of supernatural grace, means of vital communion with God. Divorced from the offer of supernatural grace, which belongs to it as a "cult," Christianity will become a mere system of morality. Yet the attempt is often made, especially in the present day, to rule out this supernatural characteristic of our religion as an alien accretion which has interfered sadly with its true spiritual nature as an ethical development of human nature towards the highest human ideals. It is this contention which we are now to consider.

1

Religion in its earliest stage seems to have been a vague sense of awe and uneasiness felt by man in the presence of what he regarded as mysterious or uncanny. Thus understood, it was the parent of the whole comprehensive system of "taboo." The mysterious and uncanny was conceived as the source of infection; and the rules of taboo were man's safeguard against the risks thus incurred; they were elaborate methods of disinfection, scrupulously carried out under the instinct of self-preservation. The twin

facts of birth and death, those greatest of all mysteries, were the phenomena which excited the intensest awe and demanded the strictest observance of taboo. The ritual uncleanness in connexion with child-birth, blood-shedding, contact with dead bodies, &c., and the methods of purification employed in such cases, have left an enduring impression on all religions. And again, unfamiliar objects, such as strangers, or iron, were regarded with apprehension and subjected to stringent regulations; and the same was the case with dark, mysterious groves, oddly-shaped stones, and so forth. So far, there need not be any belief in supernatural beings; nothing but a sense of awesomeness in such things and of the necessity for walking warily and taking all due precautions against disaster. And whilst taboo proceeds on the principle of isolation, as a means of escape from perils of this sort, magic was the attempt to use the uncanny power, which constituted the peril, for the advantage of the user or the damage of his enemies. Here again there was not any necessary belief in a god; no prayer or propitiation of a supernatural being was involved; magic simply employed the *mana*, or mysterious influence recognized in various things or occasions, in order to enforce certain results desired by the man who employed it. It was essentially an exercise of power, in which the will-power of the magician was united to the weird outside powers in the universe in order to get something done. Magic, it may be noted, has two important characteristics in which it stands in marked opposition to religion: first it is individualistic (mainly so at the beginning and increasingly so in later times), aiming at the separate good of the person who uses it, instead of the

general good of a social whole, which is the objective of religion. And secondly, when it recognizes gods, it does not make its submission to them by prayer or propitiation, but treats them merely as forces to be subdued to its own will and used for its own purposes.

But speculation could not stop at this early stage. The mysteriousness of existence is explained by reference to certain mysterious "powers," which cannot be bullied or coerced, and with regard to which it is desirable to stand in the right relation; and this is the beginning of religion.¹ Such powers ("numina") appear in great profusion in the religion of the ancient Romans, men of scrupulous but unimaginative minds, who wished to do their duty by religion but shrank from taking that frankly human view of the "gods" which was congenial to the more light-hearted and artistic temperament of the Greeks. Their early religion centred round the homestead. The door by which they entered, and by which all kinds of uncanny influences might also enter, was an object of special anxiety; it was committed to the guardianship of Janus. Similarly Vesta presided over the fire, the Di Penates over the store-room, the Lar Familiaris over the land, and the Genius over the corporate life and the continuance of the family. On the other hand, Robigus, or the spirit of mildew, and Silvanus, or the wild woodland elf, who might engage in all sorts of mischievous pranks, are typical of hostile "numina," whose maleficence must be forestalled by wise precautions. The recognition of such "powers"

¹ "Religion is the effective desire to enter into a right relation to the power manifesting itself in the universe," is the definition quoted with approval by Mr. Warde Fowler from Mr. I. W. Howarth (Warde Fowler's *Religious Experience of the Roman People*, p. 8).

does not, in the main, go beyond the sphere of Animism, in which a man sees a soul or spirit in the various objects with which he comes into contact ; but a " power " which was recognized as friendly, and which came to be associated with a particular spot, and to be provided with a priest and sacrifices, would rise to a higher level ; he ceased to be a *numen*, and became a *deus* endowed with a personal individuality, and generally ended by being identified with a deity of Greek polytheism.

But the old, simple, unsophisticated religion which centred round the " numina " illustrates very well that which is the essence of all religion, the desire for a communion with God. In the homestead of the ancient Roman, these gods were part of the family circle, bound up and identified with its welfare and duly honoured with homely sacrifices made by the father of the house.

And the same desire for communion with God appears in an intenser and more conscious form in the religion of the Greeks. This is most clearly seen in the mysteries, which embody what was most real and vital in their religious experience. Now, mystery-worship has been brought into great prominence lately, especially in regard to its relationship to Christianity. In order, then, to consider it clearly in this connection, it may be well to state two positions frequently maintained, together with the counter-position which I think should be taken up with regard to them. The positions are (1) that Christianity has borrowed largely, especially in its rites of worship, from the Pagan mysteries ; and (2) that the element thus held in common by Christianity and the mysteries is irrelevant to true religion and should be got rid of,

in order that the ethical principles which are the kernel of our religion may be disengaged from a husk of magic and supernaturalism.

I shall maintain in answer (1) that the matter common to Christianity and the mysteries is of the essence of religion, and must at all costs be retained if Christianity is to be a religion at all and not a mere code of morality; and (2) that Christianity did not borrow this common matter from the mysteries, but developed it independently of them, and in a far purer form.

First of all, then, what do we mean by a Mystery in the sense in which the word is applied to certain Greek and Oriental religions? A mystery was a secret cult, to which members were admitted after undergoing a process of ritual purification. This purification included abstinence from certain foods and a cleansing of the body by ablutions or by a scouring with bran and clay.¹ The admission itself was effected by an elaborate rite of initiation. In the Eleusinian Mysteries (of Demeter and Persephone) its most prominent feature was the drinking of a sort of barley-water called *kykeon*, which symbolized the food taken by Demeter after her nine days' fast, and which therefore put the worshipper into sympathetic "rapport" with the goddess, though, in Dr. Farnell's opinion, there was no "notion of a sacrament by which the worshippers partook of the flesh of the goddess and became one with her."² It included also the tasting of some cakes which were taken from

¹ In the Dionysos-Sabazios Mysteries; see Demosthenes, *de Cor*, 259.

² Farnell's *Cults of the Greek States*, vol. v. p. 195. I am greatly indebted to this monument of erudition in my remarks on the Greek mysteries.

a basket and, after being tasted, replaced in a chest. In the mysteries of Dionysos-Sabazios the neophyte exclaimed, "Ill have I escaped and better have I found"; he was crowned with fennel and poplar, and a snake was wound round his breast. Further, the initiated were taught certain passwords (such as ὁ διὰ κόλπου Θεός, "the God round the breast," in the rites just mentioned) as means of mutual recognition, and of admission to the Temple. Also certain symbolic *objets de piété* were given to them (at Eleusis, probably images of the goddesses and corn-tokens) to be cherished in secret. The neophyte, having been thus purified and initiated, became a spectator (ἐπόπτης) of a kind of mystery-play or sacred drama in which the whole process culminated. This performance, Dr. Farnell thinks, was "a simple form of choral mimetic dancing, solemn and impressive no doubt, but not able to startle the spectator by any cunningly devised stage effects." At Eleusis this primitive drama would represent or indicate the story of Demeter bereft of Persephone, her unavailing search for her daughter, and their final reunion. As to the significance and effect of such a mystery, Dr. Farnell writes: "The solemn fast and previous preparation, the mystic food eaten and drunk, the moving passion-play, the extreme sanctity of the *ιερά* (sacred objects) revealed, all these influences would induce in the worshipper, not indeed the sense of absolute union with the divine nature such as the Christian sacrament or the hermit's reverie or the Mænad's frenzy might give, but at least the feeling of intimacy and friendship with the deities; and a strong current of sympathy was established by this mystic contact. But these deities were the powers that governed the world beyond the

grave: those who had won their friendship by initiation in this life would by the simple logic of faith regard themselves as certain to win blessings at their hands in the next. And this, as far as we can discern, was the ground on which flourished the Eleusinian hope." ¹

Friendship with the deities and a comfortable hope of happiness beyond the grave were thus the blessings aimed at by the faithful in their mystery-religion. And this point is further emphasized if we inquire why the cult of one deity became a mystery-cult whilst the cult of another did not; why, for instance, Demeter had her mysteries and Apollo had none. The answer is twofold. In the first place, Demeter was, and Apollo was not, a *chthonian* deity—that is, a deity of the under-world, a deity associated with the after-life of the departed, a deity in whose hands lay their future weal or woe. There was, naturally, something peculiarly awful and mysterious about such a deity; her worship demanded a special measure of purification on the part of the worshipper, and offered in return the special pledges or guarantees of her favour which were supplied in the quasi-sacramental forms of mystery-worship. And, secondly, her story possessed, and Apollo's did not, a pathetic interest, in its tale of suffering and bliss, of bliss won through suffering, which was appropriate for dramatic representation, and which would appeal with a strong power of attraction to the souls of the spectators, and assure them of the fellow-feeling of such a deity with them in their own afflictions.

And the same instinct for communion with the deity is displayed in a stronger and fiercer light in the

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 197.

case of Dionysus, who also was worshipped in mysteries, though his mysteries were "private," *i.e.* not sanctioned or "established" by the State as were those of Demeter. Dionysus had his origin in Thrace, where he was worshipped under the local cult-name of Sabazios; he subsequently crossed the sea to Phrygia, and also moved south through Macedonia into Greece. His worship was violent, passionate, orgiastic. It consisted in night-festivals celebrated on the mountains with dances and songs accompanied by the music of flutes and cymbals; the worshippers were mainly women, clad in flowing garments with a fawn-skin thrown over the shoulder, with horns on their heads and snakes and the thyrsus wand in their hands. They are worshipping Dionysus, "the dispenser of the fruit of the vine, the guardian-spirit of growth and increase in vegetation and all nature, the divine incarnation of the whole area and realm of natural life, the type of the highest development of the joy of living."¹ The darkness, the crash of the music, and the whirling dance are well calculated to produce an ecstatic state of intense excitement in which they can rise to communion with such a god—a communion which is realistically consummated when, in the height of their frenzied orgy, they swoop upon the sacrificial beasts to be found in the mountains, rend them asunder, and devour their raw flesh, in the faith that they are feasting on the flesh and blood of Dionysus himself, incarnate in bull or goat or fawn. Here we see the instinct of religion, in however savage and uncouth a guise, going straight to the mark of communion with the deity, yes, and sacramental communion too.

¹ Rohde, *Psyche*, vol. ii. p. 44 *seq.*, where an extraordinarily brilliant picture is given of the religion of Dionysus.

“Through divine possession, induced by sacrament or the vertigo of the sacred dance, the votary assumes the power of the nature-god to work miracles, to move mountains, to call forth rivers of milk and wine; the religion promised immortality and release from *bondage to sanity and measure*, and appealed to the craving for supra-normal moods, blending the joy of life on the mountains with the fierce lust for hot blood, a lust half animal, half religious.”¹ And Dionysus did more than offer the means of communion with himself in this life; he was also a chthonian deity, under the cult-title of Zagreus, Nukteliu, Isodaite, &c., who could protect his worshippers in the after-life. Lastly, he had a story well adapted for the mystery-play. The original form of the story, which kept to the lines of the ritual just described, was that the god was devoured by his own worshippers; but quite a different turn was given to it under the moralizing influence of the Orphic school. The fact that the votaries of Dionysus used to smear their faces with gypsum (*titanos*) suggested the myth that the Titans rent asunder and devoured the god, and were themselves destroyed by an avenging thunderbolt from Zeus; from their ashes sprang the human race, in which, accordingly, two elements are combined, the titanic body-element, which must be subdued, and the spiritual Dionysiac element, which must be fostered, &c. Meanwhile, whilst his body was thus devoured, his heart was rescued by Athene, and taken by her to Zeus, who swallowed it and afterwards secured a new birth for

¹ *Cults*, v. p. 108. This temperament, in which spirituality and a crude naturalism are compounded, which marked Dionysus and his cult, is indicated with wonderfully subtle characterisation by Pater in *Denys l'Auxerrois*, one of his 'Imaginary Portraits.'

the god as Dionysus son of Semele. Thus, however much of the story appeared in the mysteries, there was ready to hand the same pathetic tale of suffering and triumph, of death and resurrection, which gave a living, human interest to the myth of Demeter and Persephone.

The religion of the mysteries then—the deepest and most vital form of religion which Greece produced¹—aimed simply at communion with the gods here and hereafter; by a natural instinct it selected gods who had *suffered*, and therefore could be in sympathy with human ills; and who also had control of the underworld, and therefore could control the future destiny of the worshippers.

But besides the mystery-cults of Greece, there were similar rites which came from the East; these latter are very important, as they touched the worship of the Church more closely than the others. First we have the joint cult of the “great mother” (Cybele), and of Attis, who came from Phrygia. The Great Mother was received at Rome in 204 B.C., in consequence of a Sibylline prophecy that her reception would be followed by the final triumph of the Republic over Hannibal, a prophecy which was fulfilled at the battle of Zama in 202.

She duly arrived in the form of a black stone, which was carried ashore at Ostia by Scipio Nasica, and ceremoniously deposited in a shrine on the Palatine. This function is of great historical significance; it was the door through which entered those Asiatic

¹ The most striking evidence of their power lies in the fact that they burst the narrow bonds of citizenship and were open to the whole Hellenic world, including women and even slaves. All could be included; initiation, and not membership in a city-state, became the basis of the worship.

rites which modified, and ended by completely transforming, the religion of ancient Rome. At first the Romans were surprised and horrified by the details of a worship so repugnant to all their own traditions. Cybele was the guest of the Republic, but she was subjected to severe isolation; no citizen might take part in her orgies; and the games (Megalensian) celebrated in her honour in April were carefully guarded from any admixture of Asiatic ritual. This régime lasted for 250 years; but at last, in the reign of Claudius (A.D. 41-54), the restrictions were removed and full play allowed to the Orientalism of the cult. It seems that in the preceding reign (that of Caligula) the worship of Isis had been introduced from Egypt without any safeguards or restrictions; and it was obviously unfair that, if Eastern worship was to be encouraged, an exception should continue to be made in the case of a deity who had resided so long at Rome and had performed so great a service to the State.¹ A complete reversal of policy followed; Cybele's worship was established and endowed, and its associations were constituted legal corporations; in fact it stood in much the same relation to other Eastern cults as that in which the Eleusinian stood to other mysteries in Greece. Cybele, the Great Mother, represented the productive power of Nature; Attis was originally a tree-spirit, especially bound up with the pine, but had come to be regarded in a larger sense as a deity of vegetation in general. Attis was Cybele's lover, and the whole cult was "naturalistic"

¹ Cumont, *Les Religions Orientales dans le Paganisme Romain*, p. 84. In what follows I have drawn largely on this book of M. Cumont, together with his *Mystères de Mithra*. Both are delightfully written and full of facts.

to the core. Their great festival, after their recognition by Claudius, took place in March ; it symbolized the new birth of vegetation after the desolation of winter. A pine-tree was cut down, swathed as a corpse in woollen bands, decorated with violets (which sprang from the blood of Attis, as anemones from that of Adonis), and brought into Cybele's sanctuary on the Palatine. The next day (March 23) was spent as a day of mourning and abstinence, in celebration of the death of Attis, who was said to have been killed by a boar, like Adonis, or to have been exposed as a child on a river bank. On the third day, the Day of Blood, a great orgy took place ; the archigallus (or high priest) and other clergy indulged in a wild dance, to the sound of cymbals and drums and horns and flutes, and gashed, and sometimes mutilated, themselves with knives, probably as a mode of identifying themselves with their god. But at nightfall the mourning turned to joy ; Attis was roused from the sleep of death ; and the next day (March 25) was a feast (Hilaria), given over to riotous and unbridled rejoicing. The 26th was a day of rest ; and the festival ended on the 28th with a solemn procession in which a silver image of Cybele was drawn in a wagon to the brook Almo, where the image and wagon were ceremoniously washed.

Attis is a somewhat shadowy figure with wavering outlines. He naturally came to be identified with Dionysus-Sabazios, who was also worshipped in Phrygia ; but was also syncretized with a lunar deity who, as a god of night, was regarded as lord of the nether-world. He thus possessed the qualifications for mystery-worship : a sensational and pathetic story, and a position of influence in the nether-world,

derived alike from his vegetative and lunar characteristics. Of his mysteries we know very little, except that there was a formula recited by the worshipper at the time of his initiation: "I have eaten from the drum; I have drunk from the cymbal; I have become an initiate of Attis."¹

But even more important were the mysteries of Isis. Osiris and Isis were brother and sister as well as husband and wife. They had another brother, Set (or Typhon), who conspired against Osiris, shut him up in a coffer, and threw him into the Nile. Isis wandered, mourning, in search of the body; at last she found it; but it was also found by Set, by whom it was rent into fourteen fragments and scattered abroad. Hereupon the sun-god Ra sent the jackal-headed Anubis, who helped Isis to piece the fragments together; on which Osiris revived, and became king of the dead and judge of souls. Like other chthonian deities, Isis and Osiris were originally deities of vegetation. The connexion is natural enough; cereals and trees (such as wheat and the vine) strike downwards to the lower world, and, indeed, in winter seem to have their whole existence there; and so come to be associated in men's minds with that gloomy, mysterious realm, and with the fate of those who pass into it. So we find that in the temple of Isis at Philæ there is a picture of the dead Osiris with stalks of corn growing from him, watered by a priest, with the inscription, "This is the form of him whom one may not name, Osiris of the mysteries, who springs from the returning waters" of the Nile.²

The cult gained official recognition at Rome in

¹ *Relig. Orient.*, p. 103. Cf. Frazer, *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, p. 229.

² Frazer, *op. cit.*, p. 323.

A.D. 38, when Caligula built a temple to Isis Campensis in the Campus Martius ; and this recognition only confirmed and deepened a popularity which had already been acquired in other parts of Italy. During the next few centuries the worship spread throughout the Roman Empire, and only received its death-blow in A.D. 391, when the Patriarch Theophilus burnt the Serapeum at Alexandria and destroyed the colossal statue of the god.

The religion, thus introduced into the Roman world, had been Hellenized under the Ptolemies in Egypt, Serapis being identified with Osiris ; and since one of the reputed agents in this process was Timotheus, one of the Eumolpidæ of Eleusis, it is only to be expected that Eleusinian influence should have been active in the Egyptian mystery-worship.¹ The mystery-play represented Isis searching (like another Demeter) for the divine body of Osiris, amongst the lamentations of the bystanders ; then the discovery of the fragments of the body, their coming together, the revival of the God, and the shouts of joy and exultation with which it was received. The popularity of these mysteries seems to have been grounded on the fearless confidence which marked their utterances and their promises. Whereas other cults hinted at a blessed immortality, the Egyptian rite boldly identified the faithful departed with Osiris himself, and crowned him with the *calathus* of the God. And the prayers which elsewhere were addressed to the deities became, in the Egyptian cults, commands which compelled their obedience, provided the correct form of words were duly used ; in other words, the Egyptian religion was largely magic, and for that reason likely to attract a large following amongst the mass of the people.

¹ Cumont, *Relig. Orient.*, p. 113.

Apuleius, writing about the middle of the second century A.D., gives a glowing and enthusiastic description of Isis-worship as he knew it. In the last book of his *Metamorphoses* the hero of the novel is converted to her religion and initiated into her mysteries. The account is most interesting; the following points may be just referred to. First, we note the syncretistic tendency of pagan religion towards an ultimate monotheism, which finally took the form of sun-worship. Thus, in his first invocation of the "supreme goddess," Lucius is uncertain whether she would wish to be addressed as Ceres, or Venus, or Artemis, or Proserpine; he gives her a free choice amongst these various titles, with the styles and attributes which go with them.¹ And the goddess in her reply, after alluding to and accepting a number of aliases, finally declares "Queen Isis" to be her proper appellation. Secondly, the promises offered to the worshipper are clear and attractive: "You will live happily and gloriously under my protection; and when you have measured out the span of your age and descend to the lower world, I shall be shining amongst the shades of Acheron and reigning in the recesses of the Styx; and you, dwelling in the Elysian fields, will constantly adore my propitious power." And not only so, but by devout worship and pious observance he will find that his earthly life can be prolonged, by her alone, beyond its appointed limit.²

Thirdly, certain indications are given, in carefully guarded language, as to the rite of admission to the mysteries. Lucius is solemnly warned of the sin and

¹ "Quoquo nomine, quoquo ritu, quaqua facie te fas est invocare."—*Met.*, xi. 2.

² *Ib.*, c. 6.

danger of unduly hurrying on the service: "For the bars of hell and the guardianship of salvation are in the hands of the goddess, and the initiation is effected under the symbols of a freely chosen death and a salvation wrought by prayer." ¹

And after the ceremony has been performed, it is summarized in the following enigmatic language: "I approached the bounds of death; I trod the threshold of Proserpine; I passed through all the elements, and returned; at midnight I saw the sun gleaming with white light; I approached the gods of heaven and hell, and worshipped them face to face. See! I have told you the tale; and though you have heard it, it must still be dark to you." ²

Such language certainly suggests the use of scenery and stage-effects of a more elaborate character than appear to have been employed in the Greek mysteries; and the rite appears to have included an object-lesson in revealed cosmography ("per omnia elementa vectus").

Fourthly, whilst Isis-worship obviously involved an imposing and beautiful ritual, its moral requirements do not seem to have been exacting. The aspirant for initiation is required to abstain from flesh-food and from wine for ten days previously, and also to pay certain dues, which latter were somewhat of a difficulty to Lucius. The hero alludes, indeed, rather nervously, to the need of a "circumspect life"; but there is no indication of its characteristics, and no allusion to repentance in connexion with his very uncircumspect past.³ The religion does not seem to

¹ "Ipsam traditionem ad instar voluntariæ mortis et precariæ salutis celebrari."—*Met.*, c. 21.

² *Ib.*, c. 23.

³ cc. 19, 23, 28, 30.

have advanced beyond the stage of "ritual purity," coupled with vague religious aspirations.

Mithra belongs to a different environment. He was worshipped by the Persians as the light of the sky, and later was identified with the sun. He is the god of truth and justice, pre-eminently the *soldier's god*; he was worshipped with the immolations of beasts and recitation of prayers, after a previous purification by ablutions and flagellations. It is his function to watch over the world; he is the chosen instrument used by Ormuzd in his age-long strife with Ahriman; as the sun, he appears as the bringer of increase, growth, and production, and also as a mediator between man and the far-off God. Symbolically, he is represented standing between two youths bearing torches, of which the one is raised and the other lowered. The mystery-tale spoke of him as born from a rock in the sight of some shepherds, clothing himself with fig-leaves, making a league with the Sun, subduing and slaying a bull from whose body were born all useful plants and animals; and at last, after partaking of a sacred feast with the Sun, ascending in the Sun's chariot to heaven, where he dwells as the protector of man and also as his judge.

A good deal of Chaldean astrology came to be mixed in with an ascetic dualistic philosophy natural to Persia. Thus, after death the good ascend gradually to heaven, passing through seven gates, each guarded by an angel of Ormuzd, who can only be satisfied by the repetition of a phrase taught in the mysteries. Each gate represents the zone of a planet, and at each the soul (like Dante in Purgatory) lays aside the quality which it had derived, on its descent to

earth, from the several planets. At last, bare of all vice and feeling, it passes into the eighth heaven of the fixed stars, to endless felicity. Finally, after plagues caused by Ahriman, the end of the world will come; a new bull will appear; Mithra will descend and resuscitate the dead, will sacrifice the bull, mingling his fat with consecrated wine, and therewith will give a drink of immortality to the just. The bad, and Ahriman, will be consumed by fire, and the purified world will be happy ever after.

There were no less than seven degrees to be passed in initiation to the Mithra mysteries.¹ Before partaking of the sacramental feast, the neophyte's eyes were bandaged and his hands bound; he jumped over a ditch of water; was loosed by a Liberator; then witnessed certain sham murders and other rites of a savage freemasonry by which the initiation was accomplished. He might also submit to a horrible rite called *taurobolium*, in which the worshipper, standing in a ditch, was drenched in the blood of a bull slain above, whereby he was invested with a new birth (*tauroboliatus* being synonymous with *renatus*) through the sacrificed life of the sacred animal.

Mithra is thus conceived somewhat as an Angel of succour; suffering is not experienced by him; it is transferred to the mystic bull; he is mediator and judge; champion and leader of the armies of light against the powers of darkness. His religion had an enormous success. Introduced at Rome about the beginning of the second century, it spread rapidly through Dacia and Pannonia, through the influence of the legions, which were largely recruited from the

¹ Their names are Corax, Eryphius, Miles, Leo, Perses, Heliodronius, and Pater.—Cumont, *Mystères de Mithra*, p. 126.

East ; and in England possessed sanctuaries at London and Chester and Caerleon. The Emperor Commodus was initiated into it ; and in 307 Diocletian, Galerius, and Licinius consecrated a temple at Carnuntum to Mithra as " the champion of their Empire." Its popularity at court was probably due, in part at least, to the fact that it furthered the attribution of divine right, and even divinity, to the Emperors. The Persians held that the Majesty of the King came from God, who gave him a *Hvareno*, a grace or glory, which rendered him invulnerable. This term was translated by *Fortuna*, and the expressions *Fortuna Augusti* and *Augustus invictus* show the influence of Mithra and his claim to the gratitude of the sovereign. At one time it looked as if Mithraicism was to be the religion of the Roman Empire, but the barbarian invasion and the conversion of Constantine were fatal blows to its influence ; it became subject at once to imperial laws against astrology ; and finally died away in the course of the fourth century, handing on the torch of Persian dualism to the sect of the Manichees.¹

I have dealt at this length with the mystery-religions in order to emphasize the fact that here, as in the homelier and quieter cults of the " numina " at Rome, the real nature of religion is plainly exhibited. Religion was essentially, not an ethical system and not a doctrinal creed, but a desire to attain to communion with the gods in this life, and to a fuller and more blissful life in their company after death. It is not necessary to point out that a similar, though more spiritual " thirst for God " was the very life of the Hebrew religion, and of the Psalms, which are its most

¹ Cumont, *op. cit.*, p. 176.

perfect expression. But Christianity, considered as a religion, has precisely the same convictions and objects; her creed and her sacraments make this quite clear. So far, then, from condemning the elements common to our religion and to the mystery-cults as so much irrelevant and imported superstition, we shall insist that they deal with the central reality of religion itself. A conception of religion in which the Jews, the Romans, the Greeks, the Syrians, Egyptians, and Persians are substantially in agreement with Christendom has, at any rate, an influential backing.

2

And now we go on to our second point—namely, whether the matter found in common in Christianity and the mystery-cults was, or was not, borrowed by the former from the latter. When we examine the evidence, we are at once struck by two facts. On the one hand, the Christian Fathers use language of the strongest detestation and horror when they allude to the mystery-worship of Greeks or Orientals—language which is quite incompatible with the feeling of any sympathy with such worship or with any disposition to borrow from it. And, further, it is chronologically certain that, substantially and in the main outlines, the Christian rites had been definitely formed apart from and anterior to any such influence from the side of the mysteries. And, on the other hand, we find many resemblances in matters of ritual and ceremonial between the Christian and pagan cults, and a widespread tendency on the part of Christian writers of a certain date to employ much of the terminology of the mysteries in expounding and advocating their own religious system.

First, then, the Fathers were so prejudiced against the mysteries that they treated them in some respects unfairly. They failed to recognize the element of truth which these cults expressed and the witness which they bore to the real essence of religion. In their eyes such pagan cults were simply Satanic parodies of Christianity. "The devil," says Tertullian, "rivals the realities of divine sacraments with his idolatrous mysteries. He himself baptizes his own believers and faithful ones, promising the riddance of sins at the font; and Mithra, if I remember aright, signs his own soldiers on the forehead, celebrates an offering of bread, represents a symbol of the resurrection, and recovers his crown at the sword's point."¹ The last words refer to a sham martyrdom, at which the worshipper was presented with a crown and rejected it with the words, "Mithra is my crown."² And in another place, referring to the use of water in mystery-worship, "Here too we recognize the zeal of the devil rivalling the things of God and celebrating baptism amongst his own. The unclean cleanses, the destroyer liberates, the damned absolves. He will ruin, forsooth, his own work, by washing away the sins which himself inspires!"³

Similarly, Clement of Alexandria has nothing but withering scorn⁴ for the mysteries of Demeter and Dionysus; he treats them as being on precisely the same level as the crude and licentious mythology from which they sprang. In fact, the attitude of the Fathers to the Greek and Oriental mysteries is identical with the later attitude of Roman missionaries when

¹ *De Prescript. Heret.*, 40. I owe this reference to Amrich.

² Tertullian, *De Corona*, 15.

³ *De Bapt.*, ch. 5.

⁴ *Exhortatio*, ch. 2.

confronted with certain heathen rites in Tartary. "This only do I affirm," writes Father Grueber, "that the devil so mimics the Catholic Church there, that although no European or Christian has ever been there, still in all essential things they agree so completely with the Roman Church as even to celebrate the sacrifice of the Host with bread and wine: with my own eyes have I seen it."¹

And if this attitude of utter antagonism and fiery indignation prohibits the idea that Christianity consciously borrowed any elements of its system from the mysteries, the same conclusion follows from considerations of chronology. It is not contended that this borrowing goes back to an earlier date than about the end of the second century A.D.; prior to that neither the terminology nor the ceremonial of Church worship offer sufficient analogies to mystery-worship to make the borrowing a plausible hypothesis. But long before that time the cult-system of Christianity, certainly in Baptism and the Eucharist, had been firmly established and supplied with all its essential features; it had been developed independently, before any influence from the side of the mysteries can be considered to have begun. None of the attempts to establish the contrary can be regarded as successful. We are invited, indeed, by Amrich² to recognize an unmistakable instance of such influence in the Christian doctrine of pre-baptismal sin and the effect of Baptism upon it. Such sin, he says, was regarded not so much as a moral offence, but rather as a stain

¹ Quoted in Jevons, *Introduction to the History of Religion*, p. 219.

² *Das Mysterienwesen in seinem Einfluss auf das Christentum*, p. 189. This book is written with a real desire to be impartial, but is governed by the idea of supernatural grace as "magic," and therefore ■ irrelevant to true religion.

wiped out, an uncleanness from which the neophyte is ceremonially cleansed, in the baptismal rite; and the mysteries were responsible for such a conception. But, in the first place, the idea of ritual impurity, as a sort of physical infection removed by physical methods, was not in any way confined to the mysteries, but was a universal characteristic of primitive thought; and, secondly, it was an idea which was transformed and spiritualized by Christianity in its very earliest teaching. "*Water and the Spirit*" was to be the Christian method of purification. And S. Paul, in alluding to just this pre-baptismal sin committed in heathen days, writes, "*Such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified*, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our God."¹ Christian purification, from the very outset, consisted in that combination of two elements, the outward and the inward, the material and the spiritual, which marks her sacramental system.

Again, we are told that the mysteries produced, or at any rate strengthened, the Christian conception of immortality, which is presented not as a reward of merit, but as due to an external ritual act, as a "physically mediated boon" bestowed by something like magic.² It is quite true that Christianity associated everlasting life with the Sacraments, and would have repudiated the impossible idea that it was a mere "reward of merit." But the doctrine both of S. Paul and S. John was a doctrine not of "immortality," but of "eternal life" offered to Christians, in this world as well as in the next, through their union with Christ. The Sacraments were conceived not as a magic potion ensuring an indefinite prolongation of existence be-

¹ 1 Cor. vi. 11.

² Amrich, *loc. cit.*, p. 187.

yond the grave, but as a partaking of the Divine nature, whereby a spiritual, eternal life is lived both here and hereafter. In fact, the two aspects or phases of this eternal life, on earth and in heaven, are so intimately fused together that it is often difficult to make out which S. Paul has mainly in mind ;¹ and S. John puts them side by side in his great discourse on the Bread of Life : " This is the will of My Father, that everyone that beholdeth the Son, and believeth in Him, should have eternal life ; and I will raise him up at the last day." ² Eternal life differs in kind as well as in duration from ordinary existence ; its everlastingness is a mere corollary from its eternity ; because it is a life hid with Christ in God, it is exempt from destruction. Thus, here too the spiritual conception is interfused with the material, and becomes the dominant idea ; and where this is the case, where the whole atmosphere is one of worship, self-surrender, and purification of soul and body, it is quite futile to talk of " magic."

The fact is, such arguments might have been plausible if the New Testament did not exist, or, again, if it were found to be saturated with the ceremonial and terminology of the mysteries ; but, as things are, it is abundantly clear that Christianity had manifested itself as an independent cult (or sacramental system) from its very beginning, and that, when it met the mysteries later, it confronted them as a rival cult, indignant at their existence and contemptuous of their claims.

¹ See, *e.g.*, Rom. vi. 4, 8.

² S. John vi. 40 (R.V.). Cf. v. 25 and 28-29, xvii. 3.

3

We can now pass to the second point alluded to above—namely, the adoption of much of the terminology of the mysteries by Christian writers of the third century onwards, and the ritual resemblances of the two systems.

The rise of Neo-Platonism about the beginning of the third century is a significant mark of the temper which was making itself felt in contemporary thought. People despaired of this world; it seemed, under the artificial bureaucracy of the Empire, to offer no scope for their energies and no satisfaction for their souls. The need of salvation made itself felt, both in the sense of happiness in a future life and in the sense of translation into a mystical supra-normal existence in the present world; people felt, as Christianity had long ago declared, that they must be born again. But, unfortunately, the evil from which they sought deliverance was not conceived as sin or transgression; it was, indeed, no longer thought of as mere ritual uncleanness; yet the deeper view which had supervened located it, not in the *will*, but in the *body*; not the body as subject to any particular defilement, but the body as such, as itself essentially unclean. Hence came the need of a new and more stringent purification, which should treat the body as a prison-house, or a seat of corruption, and teach the soul to loathe and despise it. And this was exactly what the mystery-worship, schooled by Orphic and Pythagorean influence, and purged of the grossness which naturally belonged to it, was prepared to offer.

Further, on the more intellectual plane, knowledge was being identified with "revelation"; it was re-

garded as consisting in moments of ecstatic feeling and exaltation, and such experience could either be sought in philosophic contemplation, or, more readily, in the excitement and emotionalism of the mysteries. Plato had used mystery-terms as metaphors in his description of philosophy; but now, in literal fact, the "philosopher" was one who had actually been initiated. The result was that the mysteries had the chance of their lifetime; we have seen above how they grew and flourished and entered more and more deeply into the life of the people. So it was only natural that anyone who wished to express facts of spiritual experience in an intelligible way should be led to make use of the terminology of the mysteries. It was so with the Christian writers of this period and onwards, until the decay of the rival system had set in. Thus a baptized person is "initiated"; to baptize is to "lead to initiation"; "initiation" is used for both Baptism and Communion; and "mystery" without any explanatory addition is used sometimes for the Eucharist as a rite, sometimes for the consecrated elements. In a late writer like the pseudo-Dionysius this mode of expression has become a perfect obsession and an irritating mannerism. We frankly admit, then, that at one time Baptism and the Eucharist were frequently and currently spoken of under the technical terminology of the mysteries. The mysteries were the dominant type of religion; Christianity was a weaker rival, who, in order to make herself heard and comprehended, had to employ language understood by those whom she addressed. But, further, it was necessary, for polemical and apologetic purposes, that Christianity should show that it too had its rites of purification and initiation and

its means of communion with the Deity—rites and means, however, which rested on a surer foundation than dramatized myth and exalted feeling. Accordingly, it adopted their familiar terms and categories to show that it could meet them and beat them on their own chosen territory and with their own weapons. Thus Clement deliberately uses Dionysiac topics and phraseology in a plea for Christianity: "Come, O madman, not leaning on the thyrsus, not crowned with ivy; throw away the mitre; throw away the fawn-skin; come to thy senses. I will show thee the Word, and the mysteries of the Word, expounding them *after thine own fashion*. This is the mountain beloved of God, not the subject of tragedies like Cithæron, but consecrated to dramas of the truth—a mountain of sobriety, shaded with forests of purity. . . . Come thou also, O aged man, leaving Thebes; and casting away from thee both divination and Bacchic frenzy, allow thyself to be led to the truth. I give thee the staff on which to lean. Haste, Tiresias; believe, and thou shalt see. . . . O truly sacred mysteries! O stainless light! My way is lighted with torches, and I survey the heavens and God; I become holy whilst I am initiated. The Lord is the hierophant, and seals while illuminating him who is initiated, and presents to the Father him who believes, to be kept safe for ever. Such are the revelries of my mysteries. If it be thy wish, be thou also initiated, and thou shalt join the choir along with angels around the unbegotten and indestructible and the only true God, the Word of God, raising the hymn with us."¹

But, apart from terminology, Christianity exhibits in its rites and ceremonies many analogies with the

¹ *Exhortatio*, ch. 13; Wilson's translation.

mystery-cults; and especially with the worship of Mithra. It is obvious, indeed, that as Mithraicism only gained a footing in Rome at the beginning of the second century, after the subjection of Mesopotamia by Trajan, none of the essential characteristics of the Christian Sacraments can have been borrowed from it. The main facts of an initiation, a priesthood, a liturgy, grew up independently in it under the dominant idea of mystery-worship. Still the analogies are close and interesting. Thus those who were initiated into the "soldier" grade of Mithraicism were signed on their forehead, probably with a hot iron. It is natural to regard the branding of Roman soldiers as responsible both for this Mithraic rite and also for the use of the term "seal" (σφράγις) as applied to Christian Baptism. Further, in the Mithra liturgy breads were consecrated, and also water mixed with the juice of a plant called Haoma, for which the juice of the grape was substituted later. There were duly appointed clergy, including a "summus pontifex," who could only marry once; also "virgins" and "continentes." There were three hours of prayer to the sun—at dawn, at midday, and at evening; Sunday was naturally the principal day of worship; at the Liturgy the celebrant offered victims to the upper and the lower gods; and to the sound of a sanctuary bell unveiled the image of Mithra. Honey, again, was placed on the tongue of the worshipper as a sign of purification; but the analogy to the milk and honey given to the Christian neophyte was very slight, as the Christian rite seems to have had a Jewish reference to the "promised land."

Lastly, it may be noted that those who had been initiated into the four higher grades of the Mithra

mysteries were called "communicants" (μετέχοντες), whilst those who belonged to the three lower ones were "servers" (ὑπηρετοῦντες).

It will be seen that the resemblances, though in some cases close and detailed, go hand in hand with a profound difference in the spirit and character of the two cults. Mithraic asceticism, resting on the Persian "dualism" which despised the body, is quite opposed to the Christian asceticism which disciplines and consecrates it; and the Mithraic "communion service" commemorates Mithra's own banquet with the Sun, and has no suggestion of expiation or a real presence.

Turning to the Greek mysteries, we find much the same state of things. Most of the resemblances are rooted in the general idea of "purification" as required in any solemn approach to the deity; and there is nothing specifically either Greek or Christian in that. For instance, the removal of the shoes and outer clothing before the rite of exorcism, preparatory to Christian Baptism, had its counterpart in the mystery initiations. The crowning of the neophyte, mentioned in some Oriental Christian liturgies, recalls the myrtle garlands worn at Demeter's mysteries. But perhaps the most striking point in which the Christian cult resembled the pagan is to be found in the ceremonies following Baptism. The Sacrament was solemnized at night (especially on Easter Eve), and was succeeded by a procession of the neophytes, carrying lighted tapers, into a brightly-lighted church, where they were welcomed by the congregation of the faithful. The scene is closely parallel to the procession of the newly-initiated at the Eleusinian mysteries, where they passed into a brilliantly-illuminated temple,

into the presence of the Eoptæ, and saw the images of the gods, and listened to a homily from the hierophant.

Similarly, in the Isis mysteries, we are told that a bath of purification and the imposition of certain rules of abstinence were followed by a function in which the neophyte was clothed in sacred garments, crowned, and placed on a platform in the temple, holding a torch in his hand, in the presence of the faithful.

The Eucharist again presented 'certain' analogies with mystery-worship in the careful exclusion of the uninitiated, and in the arrangements of the church, in which the sanctuary corresponded to the end of the temple where the images were placed, in the use of curtains, in the fencing of the altar, and so forth.¹

4

These seem to have been the principal points of resemblance between the Christian and the mystery rites. They are of extraordinary interest as showing a very widespread instinct for what may fairly be called sacramental worship, that is, a method of approach to the deity, and communion with him, through outward and visible rites, in which ceremonial washing, solemn initiation into a society, a partaking of sacred food, consecrated buildings, and congregational worship are all employed as means of communion with a god who is conceived as, in a sense, both human and divine. And everywhere this worship was held to confer some kind of salvation

¹ Amrich, *Mysterienwesen*, pp. 214 seq.

from the sin and misery and insufficiency of earthly existence, some kind of "new birth" to union with the deity.

The difference was that, in the case of Christianity, this process of salvation centred in the person of an historical Saviour, and extended itself to include the sanctification ("the adoption" or "redemption") of the body; whilst the Pagan mysteries, resting on myths which symbolized natural processes, had not power to save either soul or body. Being completely naturalistic themselves, they could not save men from their bondage to the natural.¹ Their solemn pageants, their secret rites, their pathetic stories, were all admirably adapted to rouse men's feelings, feelings of revolt against the shortness and bitterness of life, feelings of aspiration after God and immortality. But this feeling had no solid basis to rest upon; any probing of mystery-worship would only show it to be utterly devoid of spiritual truth or redemptive power. Its appeal lay in sheer feeling or emotion with nothing to rely upon but itself; and feeling of this sort can only save itself from extinction, can only verify and justify and propagate itself, by becoming more and more emotional, by rising gradually to an unbridled frenzy of excitement. And this is exactly what happened in the mysteries. Of themselves they had no power to go further; but it was their fate to be pressed into the service of philosophy and gathered up into the moral march of civilization, and thus made to bear witness to ideas and duties with which originally they had nothing on earth to do. They were picturesque

¹ "The attempt to wed a high spiritual ideal with nature-worship was doomed to failure."—Dill, *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius*, p. 626.

and popular enough to be able to supply telling texts and illustrative anecdotes for serious thinkers and preachers like the Emperor Julian ; whilst the Drama, in which they told their tale, could be philosophized and moralized, be turned into a vehicle for the higher education of the people, and incidentally become a platform for an anti-Christian propaganda. Long before, Orphic influences had turned the myth of Dionysus into a tedious ethical discourse ; and now the Stoics and Neo-Platonists were discovering metaphysical dogmas in the cults of Isis and Cybele, and demanding decency of conduct from their ministers. As Cumont remarks, " The Egyptian mysteries followed rather than directed the general progress of ideas ; philosophy transformed them, instead of receiving an inspiration from them." ¹ And again of Cybele and Attis, " Nowhere is there so startling a contrast between the moralizing trend of the theologians and the crude immorality of the tradition. A god who is to be the august master of the universe was the mean and contemptible hero of an obscene love-story ; the taurobolium, which was to satisfy man's highest aspirations towards spiritual purification and immortality, appears as a shower-bath of blood, suggesting a cannibalistic orgy." ²

The fact is, mystery-worship has a long and chequered history. Its origin lay probably in certain ritual processes of " sympathetic magic " which aimed at promoting the growth of vegetation. The original purpose and meaning of the ritual were forgotten, and myths were invented to give a new and more poetical explanation of it. Hence sprang the " vegetation deities," whose adventures and powers qualified them

¹ *Relig. Orient.*, p. 139.

² *Ib.*, p. 108.

for mystery-worship; whilst finally the crudities and nakedness which still belonged to them were clothed and allegorized by the moralists and metaphysicians of the empire. But Christianity had the enormous advantage of starting from the outset on a moral and spiritual level, as well as of having an historical basis to rest upon. Her rites did not need to be transformed by the philosophers; it was rather the philosophers who were transformed by them. When she offered "salvation" and a "new birth" through Christ, she could do so without equivocation or reserve. Baptism and the Eucharist had no discreditable past to be kept in the background; they claimed, from their first inception, to be divine channels of incorporation into a divine humanity, a humanity declared to be divine by the historical facts of a life, a death, and a resurrection.

On the whole, then, there is no objection to calling Christianity a mystery-cult, provided we bear in mind the differences as well as the resemblances between it and the Pagan cults which we have considered. Such a title, indeed, is useful, because it focuses attention on the fact that Christianity is a *religion*, which, as such, aims at nothing less than a living communion with God, and that so great a goal can only be reached by the grace which God supplies and the use of the means which He prescribes. As long as we think of our religion as a mystery-cult we shall at any rate be saved from identifying it with an ethical system or a social propaganda or a philosophy of the universe; and this will be something to be thankful for. We find, indeed, this sacramental or "mystery" view of religion recognized in the Gospel, in the teaching of Christ, alongside of other aspects. There are, in fact,

three main elements or aspects in our Lord's teaching on salvation: the moral, the eschatological, and the sacramental. From the moral point of view, salvation is the wage earned by our own efforts after righteousness, the reward of our own faithful performance of the work committed to us. The eschatological aspect gives a new turn, a fresh point, to this. Eschatologically, salvation is the sudden appearance of the Son of Man, inaugurating a new kingdom of the elect; in view of which, our moral duties are gathered up into the one supreme and comprehensive duty of detachment from worldly cares and pleasures. The sacramental aspect, again, modifies the last. The Sacraments offer us an avenue of approach to the Son of Man, and membership in the kingdom inaugurated by Him, even whilst the present constitution of the world continues. The sacramental is not a substitute for the eschatological aspect of the truth; Christ *will* come, at some unknown time, in power and great glory, and the existing dispensation of things will have its end. But in the meantime He comes, in a supernatural but hidden manner, in the Sacraments, in which He claims now our detachment from the world and our allegiance to His rule. And, historically, we find that, as the eschatological hope ceased to monopolize the attention of Christian believers, the sacramental system came forward into clearer light and fuller recognition in the Church, as the appointed means of communion with Christ, of life in Him, and also of loyalty to the laws of His kingdom.

For, lastly, the Sacraments react on the moral element of Christianity. They give us the means of achieving that moral loyalty to Christ's will which is

so difficult for our unaided powers. Salvation will be the wage or reward of human effort, but of human effort reinforced and transformed and inspired by sacramental grace, and so fitted for incorporation at last into the Kingdom of the Son of Man.

NOTE

"MYSTERY" IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

It is worth noting that in the New Testament itself the word "mystery" is used in a sense quite distinct from that which it bears in the pagan worships just described. It is true that in both cases we find the idea of a secret; but whilst in the pagan cults this secrecy attaches to a human society, the members of which have the privileged and exclusive knowledge of certain truths, in the New Testament the secrecy belongs to God's eternal purposes, of which two statements are made: (a) that they could not be known without revelation, and (b) that the revelation of them has been given in the Gospel. In the case of the pagan cults, the truths are hidden from all except the initiated members of the society; in the New Testament they *were* hidden from all without exception, but are now revealed universally to all. Hence, as Bishop Lightfoot pointed out,¹ the characteristic words used in connexion with the Christian mysteries are such as express an act of making known or publishing abroad. The following texts will illustrate the Christian significance of the word. "I came . . . proclaiming to you the mystery of God";² "That utterance may be given unto me . . . to make known with boldness the mystery of the Gospel";³ or, with the sense more fully defined, "We speak God's wisdom

¹ On Col. i. 26.

² 1 Cor. i. 2.

³ Eph. vi. 19.

in a mystery, even the wisdom that hath been hidden . . . but unto us God revealed it by the Spirit";¹ "By revelation was made known unto me the mystery, as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ, which in other generations was not made known unto the sons of men, as it hath now been revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; to wit that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs," &c.;² "The revelation of the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal, but now is manifested," &c.³

So, when S. Paul says, "Let a man so account of us, as of ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God," he means that on them has been laid the duty of dealing out and communicating to others that revelation which has been committed to them. So, again, the resurrection-life is given as an instance of a mystery, or a truth once hidden and now revealed. "Behold, I show you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed," &c.⁴ In 2 Thess. ii. 7, "the mystery of iniquity" is an iniquity which is temporarily permitted in God's hidden purposes, "until the iniquitous one is revealed."

Lastly, we find in the New Testament a transition to a slightly different but kindred meaning, in which "mystery" signifies the hidden sense, the inner meaning, of some symbolical action or phrase or illustration. The word is thus used of marriage: "This mystery is great, but I speak of Christ and the Church";⁵ of Christ's teaching: "Unto you is given the mystery of the kingdom of God, but unto them that are without all things are done in parables";⁶ of apocalyptic symbolism: "The mystery of the seven stars . . . the seven stars are the angels of the seven Churches";⁷ "I will tell thee the mystery of

¹ 1 Cor. ii. 7, 10.

² Eph. iii. 3-5; cf. verses 9-11 and Col. i. 26.

³ Rom. xvi. 25.

⁴ 1 Cor. xv. 51.

⁵ Eph. v. 32.

⁶ S. Mark iv. 11.

⁷ Rev. i. 20.

the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her.”¹ This meaning of “mystery” became common later, especially in the school of Alexandria ; but, whatever the dangers and difficulties which attend its application, it is quite different from the pagan meaning. This knowledge of the hidden meaning of Scripture is not shut up to members of a secret society, but is open to all Christians of high spiritual culture and understanding.

¹ Rev. xvii. 7.

VI

THE CULT OF THE PASSING MOMENT (*b*)

1. PRINCIPLES OF SPIRITUAL LIFE.
2. THE CULT RESTATED AS THEIR OUTCOME.

VI

THE CULT OF THE PASSING MOMENT

I

WE started with a conception of religion as a waiting upon God, as an immediate experience of His presence and of His will communicated to us from moment to moment; and we drew attention to the qualities of freshness and vitality and happiness which such an attitude brings with it.

Then, in the second paper, we tried to show that this experience of God is a valid experience; that it is no mere "private business" of our own fancy, no mere automatic expression of a particular kind of temperament, but a genuine apprehension of objective Reality, an apprehension in which our nature attains its own perfection.

Then, in *Development of Doctrine*, we argued that experience of God is a matter in which the whole personality, not merely the discursive understanding, is engaged; that the will and the affections have their proper function in such an experience, not only in supplementing the inferences of the understanding, but in interpenetrating it, and sometimes modifying and correcting it; that the concrete personality of understanding and will and affection, indissolubly united, is the medium in which God is manifested, the organ by which He is experienced.

Next, we urged that *discipline* is the first and most necessary process by which the human personality is trained and qualified for such experience; and, lastly, we pointed out the high importance, attested in many quarters, of the *cultus* element in religion, consisting in an organized sacramental system by which the worshipper is brought into a living contact with God. Sacramental communion, assuring him of the reality of God's presence, becomes the basis or starting-point of a religious experience which gradually develops into a fuller and richer insight into the meaning of that presence.

We have, then, arrived at this result; that the God to whom we are to listen at each passing moment is a real objective Being; that if we are to hear and understand His voice, we must wait upon Him with the united and concentrated attention of all our capacities; that discipline, or the elimination of self-will, is the necessary schooling of all these capacities for such an object; and that our awareness of God's presence and our understanding of His will grow out of His communication of His life to us in the cultus of the sacraments.

These considerations, thus developed, should enable us to return to our original conception of religion, as a cult of the passing moment, with a fuller confidence and a more comprehensive insight; in fact, to restate it, in some sort, as a philosophy of the spiritual life.

It is true that the hostility to "intellectualism," so characteristic of present-day thought, might suggest that any such philosophy is unnecessary and futile; that religion is corrupted by "philosophy and vain deceit"; that (as we have ourselves insisted) the

affection and the will have at least as much to do with it as the understanding ; that religion is *life*, and life must for ever overflow the shallow categories of philosophy.

But such an objection will not bear inspection. Philosophy is the analysis of experience, but it need not be the glorification of the intellect, which is one factor of experience. Philosophy employs intellectual terms, but it need not employ them in the intellectualist cause ; on the contrary, it may employ them in order to emphasize the importance of the affective or of the volitional factor, and to place the intellect in its appropriate position as one element involved in that spiritual life which is the ultimate reality of our nature.

And this will be made clear, if we state shortly what seem to us to be the axioms of such a philosophy.

They are four in number. First, the Spiritual Life in us depends on a communication to us of the Life of God. Secondly, the Spiritual Life consists in the co-ordinate direction of all our capacities to God. Thirdly, the dependence and the co-ordination of our nature require a vigorous self-discipline, by which God becomes the centre of our system. Fourthly, the Spiritual Life thus constituted by dependence, co-ordination, and self-discipline, is an apprehension of Eternity under the conditions and restrictions of time-processes.

If this analysis is correct, the following will seem to be the leading categories of the Spiritual Life : Dependence ; Co-ordination, or concrete unity ; Self-discipline, or mortification ; Successiveness.

We will consider them in turn.

(a) *The Spiritual Life in us depends on a communication to us of the Life of God.*

We can attend upon God and listen to Him, because He is within us. And this attitude of quiet receptivity, which is assumed by the spiritual life, must be distinguished from other attitudes which have a certain resemblance to it. For instance, it is a very modest attitude, and neither claims nor requires any exceptional natural gifts. It is not, and does not pretend to be, on the same level as the sympathetic intuition of the poet, to whom the universe is a "mighty sum of things for ever speaking," and who can interpret these voices in terms of human life. The difference is that the receptivity of the spiritual life is not concerned with that which is external to us, and which can only be understood by the insight of genius; but with something which has come within us and has thereby shown itself friendly, cognate, and easily accessible. It is an attitude of our own life to the life of God within us.

Again, this life of God within us is not a complimentary description of our own goodness or cleverness; it is distinct from anything that we possess of our own; it is not a theory or fancy of our own mind, but an objective reality which demands recognition of itself by the mind; not our thought about God, but God pressing Himself upon our thought. The spiritual life is simply our recognition of the presence of God, our yielding to the pressure of God upon our attention; its sole merit lies in the simplicity with which we hear and obey God's voice, instead of stopping our ears to it and turning aside to interests and occupations chosen by ourselves.

And it is here that the sacramental cultus lends its aid. We are obviously in a better condition to listen to God when we have a pledge and guarantee that He is present, than when we regard His presence, and perhaps His very existence, as problematical. The assurance of God's presence leads on to our understanding of His will ; and probably the most profitable form of meditation is that which simply ponders the greatness and the meaning of the gift, which has been received in our act of communicating, together with the demands which it makes upon us ; because He is within us, we can feel His influence, learn what He would have us do, and enter into present communion with Himself.

And it is important to see that the sacraments exist in order to facilitate such a relationship to God. The permanent personal communion of the soul with Him is the end, the sacraments are a means to it ; we use the sacraments in order that the spiritual life may be born or strengthened or renewed in us ; in order that we may be assured of God's presence, and so wait confidently for His guidance. And, further, it is true to say that, as the sacraments exist for the sake of the spiritual life, so the whole institutional system of the Church exists mainly for the sake of the sacraments ; whilst on the other hand the tendency to separateness and individualism, which is a temptation of the spiritual life, is checked and corrected by the essentially social character of both sacraments and Church.¹

¹ Dr. Hamilton shows good reason for suggesting that the permanent officials of the Church were first developed, in the form of Bishops and Deacons, to provide for the celebration and administration of the Eucharist (*The People of God*, vol. ii., chaps. v. and vi.) ; and that, when Bishops and Presbyters were differentiated,

In order that we may hold spiritual intercourse with God, we require the sacraments which mediate His presence ; in order that we may have the sacraments, we require a priesthood to celebrate them, a revelation which instituted and commands us to continue them, and a Church in which both priesthood and revelation have their home. As a rule, of course, we exactly reverse the true sequence of things. We put our "Churchmanship," *i.e.* our membership in an institution, first, and then go on (in some cases) to admit that, because we are Churchmen, we ought to be communicants, without quite seeing why ; occasionally we go further, and feel that, because we are communicants, we ought probably to be rather more careful about our prayers. In real truth, habitual intercourse with God in prayer holds the first place ; in order that we may pray with greater confidence and freedom, we become communicants ; in order that we may make our communion, we are Churchmen, members of a society with a priesthood and a liturgy.

It is of the first importance, if only in the cause of reunion,¹ that the principles should be stated in their proper logical order. Instead of starting with Churchmanship as the principle of primary and absolute value, a principle regarded as self-centred and self-explanatory, to be accepted for its own inherent worth and dignity and not for the help and blessings which it brings, we should rather start with the spiritual life of communion with God, the excel-

the same determining position was held by the sacrament. "In a very real sense the Presbyterate is the organ of the Church for the celebration of the Eucharist, and the Episcopate is the organ of the Church for the transmission of authority to others to represent the Church in the Eucharist" (*Ib.* chap. viii. p. 171).

¹ Cf. p. 82 above.

lence of which is appreciated by everyone. If we can show that the priesthood and the sacraments are serviceable, and even indispensable, for the development of that life, we shall thereby commend them more persuasively to the minds of our fellow-Christians than by the most eloquent advocacy of their own intrinsic claims.

That the sacraments do perform such a service, and are therefore of most high value, is, I think, quite certain. For the majority of people it is the Eucharist which gives form and substance to the idea of real intercourse with God, of the possibility of their dwelling in Him and He in them; whilst those who have made progress in such intercourse feel the need of a continual renewal and reinforcement of the divine presence, to give strength and vigour and freshness to their spiritual life. When their own powers of thought and feeling are faint and feeble, they have the assurance that the presence is still there, supporting the will, in the absence of sensible devotion.

And the Eucharist, as was suggested above, involves the whole institutional principle, the whole principle of an historical revelation received and dispensed by an organized society or Church. This means, of course, that we must be prepared to enter an arena of controversy, an atmosphere of problems and perplexity. The meaning of revelation, the criticism of the gospels, the origin of the ministry, the authority of the Church—is it worth while to evoke all these hobgoblins of darkness and debate? Can we not ignore them, shut the door on them, and converse with our own heart and in our chamber and be still? Can we not find God there? Is it necessary to seek Him in the obscure by-ways of ancient history?

But the question is, whether this programme is not beset with still greater difficulties. A God who is sought exclusively in ourselves is apt to be identified with ourselves ; and in such a case, spiritual life ends in just that sort of self-glorification which ought to be its deadliest foe. The cry of the spiritual life, "Show Thou me the way that I should walk in, for I lift up my soul unto Thee," expresses not only the authority of God, but His distinctness from the aspiring soul, and both alike are apt to be ignored or denied by a spirituality which looks only inwards.

And we must remember that the perplexities and obscurities which we have alluded to are not a peculiar property or distinction of Christianity. If there is ever to be such a thing as a revelation, it must be made at a special time and in a special place ; that is, it must enter history, and thereby become liable to historical criticism. Critics will swoop down in coveys, and be busy with the spoken language, the written documents, the state of culture in general, the special characteristics of special witnesses, the religious pre-suppositions of the age, psychological analysis, analogies from comparative religion, and a hundred other topics. And if the revelation takes the form of an incarnation in which God assumes a human body and a human mind, a whole host of other problems will centre upon the relationship of the human and divine elements in a single personality. All this is a terrible trial ; but it is the price to be paid for a belief in *God with us*, and the price is none too heavy. It is better to face every problem of historical and psychological criticism in connexion with Christian origins than to surrender without a struggle the reality of revelation and the objective truth of Christian

experience. Such experience, which makes up the spiritual life, grows directly out of the Incarnation and the sacraments; it is to be sharply distinguished from the sort of experience just mentioned, in which a man holds communion solely with himself, speculates on his own ideals, does homage to the divinity inherent in his nature. This latter form of spirituality is often commended as being safe from the onslaughts of criticism, and the plea is probably true, since the "divinity" inherent in human nature is too small and negligible a quantity to invite any severer criticism than that of an indulgent smile.

The first principle, then of a spiritual life that is worth aiming at, is that there is a real God who inspires it, and whose concern for humanity is revealed in history and perpetuated in sacrament. This means that the incarnational, institutional, historical element in Christianity is of vast importance,¹ and is not to be quietly abandoned because of the perplexities which necessarily beset any revelation which the Eternal makes of Himself in the sphere of space and time.

(b) *The Spiritual Life consists in the harmonious and co-ordinate direction of all our capacities to God.*

This principle has been affirmed indirectly in the paper on *the Development of Doctrine*. The point of our criticism of the Roman position was that the knowledge of God, which is one factor of spiritual life, was wrongly isolated from its co-factors, was treated as purely rational, and was allowed to develop inde-

¹ Its importance is admirably brought out in chapter xii, of Baron von Hügel's *Eternal Life*.

finitely on its own account, to the great embarrassment of succeeding generations. And the embarrassment is found not only in an extravagant growth of doctrine, but also in a distorted conception of the spiritual life.

This will become plain if we consider a possible objection to our criticism. It will be said that, although knowledge goes along with affection and volition as its co-factors in the spiritual life, yet knowledge itself is a matter for the reason, and must be treated on purely rational principles. Now, this is precisely what we deny. The cognitive element cannot be treated independently of the volitional and the affective, either in religion or anywhere else. *Conscious life* is the ultimate concrete fact; it alone *is* in the full sense; the cognitive, volitional, and affective elements exist within this all-pervasive whole, and can only be isolated and examined independently by a process of abstraction. Such isolation may be legitimate and necessary for particular purposes and on particular occasions; we may naturally wish, from time to time, to regard our conscious life mainly as apprehension of reality, or mainly as a striving towards reality, or mainly as loving self-devotion to reality; and we shall gain eventually a fuller and richer conception of the life itself by thus focusing our attention successively on these various aspects of it. But we must never forget that in doing this we are taking an abstract, that is, a limited and one-sided, view; we must never forget that these various aspects, just because they are really co-factors of spiritual life, are not really independent of each other, but necessarily influence and are influenced by one another. And if it is ruinous to forget this in *any* sphere of human interest, it is

especially ruinous in religion, since religion is essentially personal life as a whole, and depends for its due development on the balance and proportion of the elements which constitute that life. The same is true, indeed, of science and politics and art ; but in each of these there is a pronounced *penchant* towards a particular factor of consciousness ; towards cognition in the case of science, towards volition in the case of politics, and towards affection or feeling in the case of art. But religion proclaims, and indeed allows of, no such partiality ; it is life, concrete life, devoted to and sustained by the life of God ; and therefore each factor must have its due place, and not more than its due place, in the encompassing whole, and must submit to be corrected and supplemented and interpenetrated by the other members of the whole. A single factor can only claim independence at its own peril and at the peril of the whole. We cannot know God without at the same instant serving and loving Him ; our service of Him must, similarly, be directed by reason and warmed by love ; our love of Him must flow from knowledge and issue in acts of will.

It is psychologically impossible, then, to separate the action of reason, will, and affection in religious life ; but the attempt to do so is none the less disastrous. When we attempt to isolate one of them and treat it independently, the others are still working, but they are working in a distorted form ; instead of being recognized as partners of the favoured factor, they are made its slaves. Thus, we may treat religion from an "intellectualist" standpoint, and profess to be using only the dry light of reason in our work ; and in such a case the affections and the will, instead of

co-operating with reason, and thereby purifying and correcting it, are made to bow down and worship it, and used as instruments in its service. So, again, we are free to regard religion from the "moralistic" standpoint of the will, and to say that we hold by efficiency and believe in success; and here the reason is briefed as an advocate of pragmatism, and the affections are claimed for a juggernaut of irresistible force. Or, lastly, we may adopt the "sentimental" point of view, and say that, after all, feeling and pious aspiration are the essence of religion; and here too reason is working in the very act of abdicating its selective functions, and the will is called on to give spasmodic effect to irresponsible gusts of feeling. In all these cases, the three factors are still present, but the balance is destroyed; the favoured factor is distorted by the predominance given it, the others by their enslavement, and the whole spiritual life by its dismemberment.

If, then, there is to be a sane and genuine spiritual life, its various elements must be co-ordinated as partners and fellow-workers; the affections must add flesh and blood to the skeleton framework put together by the mind, and the will must set it to work in the service of God and man, and each process will affect the others.

And just as the operation of the will and the affections saves religion from being a speculative thesis of the reason, so the operation of will and reason saves it from being a sentimental day-dream of the heart, and the operation of reason and affection saves it from being a departmental function of the will. The spiritual life gathers up and unites all these aspects in itself. *It*, and not any one of them, is the reality;

they contribute to it ; it uses them all, and, by using, transcends them all.

This is wonderfully illustrated by S. Paul's great prayer in *Ephesians* : " That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be *strengthened with might* by His Spirit in the inner man ; that Christ may dwell in your hearts *by faith* ; that ye, being *rooted and grounded in love*, may be able to *comprehend* with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height, and to know *the love of Christ which passeth knowledge* ; that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God." ¹ The shuttle of prayer passes in and out amongst the various threads of human nature, links them up and binds them together, and so fashions the mysterious fabric of spiritual life. Yes, and the pattern woven into that fabric is the divine nature ; the spiritual life is strengthened by the Spirit, indwelt by Christ, filled with the fullness of God.

Thus the second of our principles of spiritual life, the co-ordination of all human capacities in one concrete personality, comes into its place alongside of the first, the dependence of spiritual life on God's indwelling presence. The spiritual life, just so far as it continues to be life as a whole, and is not resolved into a single aspect of life, can be itself guided and inspired by the perfect life of God, and thereby attain its full development.

S. Paul uses elsewhere some very striking expressions to illustrate this development of our religion. " My little children," he says to the Galatians,² " of whom I travail in birth again until Christ is formed in you." Human nature in itself is like an embryo,

¹ iii, 16-19.

² iv, 19.

a shapeless, formless, undeveloped thing. Christ is the ideal form into which it is to grow, if the purpose of its life is to be fulfilled. He is our ideal nature, that which we are to become, that into which we are to develop. He is our true nature, in that sense of nature in which it means that which a thing is to become. "What a thing is when its development is completed, that we affirm to be the nature of each thing," says Aristotle; and in that sense Christ is our nature. If we fall short of that, we are examples of a stunted and arrested development. We are to "grow up into Him in all things." Here, then, the progress of spiritual life is described under the category of *growth*, the natural growth of a life in obedience to the inherent law of its being. And this is a very fruitful description, because it emphasizes the quiet, spontaneous development which marks all genuine spiritual life. We can forcibly interfere with it, as the growth of the embryo can be forcibly interfered with, but our obvious and simple duty is just to give it scope to grow and increase, and not to fuss or meddle overmuch.

Christ is there, in us, as the goal and law of our development; we must just let Him work His work—shape and mould and fashion our nature, and guide it to grow up into Himself.

And the second passage illustrating the development of the spiritual life is equally instructive. "We all, with unveiled face, reflecting as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory."¹ Here the Christian's nature is a mirror of burnished brass, in which Christ is reflected; and the progress of religion is a process of transmuta-

¹ 2 Cor. iii. 18.

tion, by which an image reflected from without becomes a substantial reality within. We begin by reflecting the image of Christ, and are to end by being changed into it ourselves. What we have to supply is the faith which will remove the veil of ignorance and prejudice, and the self-discipline which keeps the soul's mirror clear; then Christ will be reflected in it; and as we concentrate our attention on that image, it will grow clearer and more real; it will gather into itself all the capacities of our nature; the shadow will become the substance; we shall be transformed, and so joined to the Lord as to become "one spirit" with Him; it will not be we who live, but Christ who liveth in us.¹

So, according to the Galatian metaphor, religion consists in our growing up into Christ by a sort of natural development; according to the Corinthian metaphor, it consists in a transformation of the natural order into the supernatural: according to the one, the human embryo develops into the manhood of Christ; according to the other, the reflection of Christ becomes the living reality of man. The two conceptions are equally valuable, and they supplement each other. It is useful to be reminded that religion, or union with Christ, is in the highest sense the natural life of man, since Christ is the complete evolution of our nature as God intended it to be; that to fall short of Christ means an arrested development of man. And on the other hand we must not forget that such a catastrophe of arrested development is fatally easy and terribly common, and can only be averted when the Christ immanent in our nature gathers that nature into Himself, so that it

¹ 1 Cor., vi., 17; Gal., ii., 20.

will not rebel against the true law of its being, but will be itself spiritualized and transformed. The nature which is to grow into Christ as its natural goal must be a renewed nature, a nature which by contemplating Christ is enabled to identify itself with Him.

So the two conceptions support and complete each other; the one emphasizes the ideal splendour of man's nature, the other its need of discipline and purification if this splendour is to be realized; and the upshot is that religion, the direction of our whole personal life to God, is effected by Christ's *guiding* and *transforming* presence in ourselves. Our own part is subsidiary: just to allow full play to the guidance, and to offer ourselves with believing and penitent hearts to be transformed into identity with Him.

And we may just point out that the perfect co-ordination of our nature, with which we have been dealing, is itself helped enormously by this exaltation of our humanity. In itself an ideal, through union with Christ it becomes a fact. Of ourselves, we always tend to exaggerate the development of one or other of our capacities; identified with Christ, we can hold the balance even. And the reason is that in Christ the balance and proportion are perfectly maintained. In Him there are none of those one-sided developments which distort our own personal life. He spoke continually of God, but never as a doctor of divinity. He was full of the tenderest love and pity for men, but there was nothing of the sentimentalist about Him; He was continually doing good and carrying out the Father's will, but cannot be thought of as professional philanthropist or reformer. In Him,

all these aspects and departments of human life are lifted up into something higher, and, in being thus lifted up, are fused together and united.

And so, too, he who is made "one spirit" with the Lord, will find his own nature unified thereby. Not reason, nor will, nor feeling, but spirit or eternal life, which co-ordinates them all, will be his veritable nature. He will be ready to think or act or pray as the Divine Spirit moves him. He will not be perturbed by frequent oscillations from one of these spheres to another; rather, the wholeness of the spiritual life, which embraces them all, will be perfected by such transitions. And in matter of fact we find that the great mystics, whose spiritual life has been most strongly developed, have always been ready to accept them and profit by them. "Whither the spirit was to go, they went, and they turned not when they went."

Spiritual life, then, or the whole personality of man guided and transformed by God within, will manifest itself in that cult of the passing moment, which was the subject of our first paper; we are coming back to our starting-point, fortified by the considerations which were dealt with later.

But before clinching our argument by a final re-statement of that thesis, we must add a few words on the third of the principles laid down above.

(c) *The dependence and the co-ordination of our nature require a vigorous self-discipline, by which God becomes the centre of our system.*

So far as we have gone, it might be possible to recognize our dependence on God's presence and

assistance, and to recognize also the need of harmonizing our own several capacities in a workable scheme of life, and yet to be living still in a sphere of self-assertion. The individual self would still be the centre of our universe; the co-ordination of the elements of the self would be merely a practical expedient for avoiding jolts and securing a smoothly running machinery, and God would be a means to an end, a help towards our achievement of a superior grade of self-development and self-culture. It is true that such self-centredness would seem utterly inconsistent with the growth of spiritual life into union with Christ, dealt with in the last section; but at the same time self-deception is deplorably possible in all religion, and it is well to recognize a real danger of self-assertion effecting a covert entrance and de-spiritualizing the spiritual life. As against this danger, then, it is necessary to insist expressly that the various capacities of our nature must be mortified as well as harmonized, that we must wait upon God's will as well as depend upon His power, in everything that we do. I do not want to repeat what was said in detail on this subject in *Per Crucem*; I will only observe that if the spiritual life is to move freely from sphere to sphere under divine guidance, this can only be done through the mortification of self-will. If the indwelling presence of Christ is to transform our nature into identity with Himself, this can only be done when we are ceasing to assert private interests and rights of our own; if we are to be instruments in God's hands we must not dictate, or even suggest, the use to which He is to put us. No more need be said on this principle here; the real problem is, to act on it; it is more important, as

à Kempis tells us, "to feel contrition, than to know its definition."

But it will brighten the outlook somewhat, if we remember that mortification is, ultimately, something positive and not negative; it is the "redemption" or "adoption" of the body and of the whole inferior nature. We have, as Julian of Norwich tells us, a higher, spiritual nature which is, itself, rooted in God; and self-discipline just means the unification of our nature, by which the lower is taken up into the higher. By His incarnation, Christ dwelt in the bodily nature, in order that "the sensuality" might thus be lifted up and purified and redeemed. "Our nature which is the higher part," she says, "is knit to God, in the making; and God is knit to our nature that is the lower part, in our flesh-taking: and thus in Christ our two natures are oned. For the Trinity is comprehended in Christ, in whom our higher part is grounded and rooted; and our lower part the Second Person hath taken." ¹

Or, as S. Paul says, "What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." ² It need only be added that the Incarnation had to be followed by the Cross, in order that the redemption of the body might be practically accomplished by a passing through death to life with Christ.

¹ *Revelations of Divine Love*, chap. lvii. This doctrine, that our higher nature is already and essentially in union with God, and that salvation consists in the lifting up of the lower nature to the same level through Christ's "flesh-taking," is characteristic of Julian. It emphasizes at once the original dignity of man and the effective work of the Incarnation.

² Romans, viii. 3.

- (d) *The Spiritual Life, thus constituted by dependence and co-ordination and self-discipline, is an apprehension of Eternity under the limitations and restrictions of time-processes.*

Eternal life, in its perfection, would be complete fruition of truth, goodness, and beauty, which are the supreme values of personal life. Such complete fruition we recognize as belonging to God; our own fruition of them must necessarily be piecemeal, fragmentary, and incomplete, because it is mediated through physical processes of the nervous system, and is achieved in successive acts of apprehension; though at the same time, since the body itself is God's work, the fruition can be in its own measure real and true. Thus eternal life in us, under our limitations and restrictions, is different from eternal life in God; the whole effort and striving of our spiritual nature is directed to the overcoming of this difference. Overcome it cannot be; our psychophysical constitution remains an insuperable obstacle; yet the struggle to overcome it is the crown as well as the crux of our highest human endeavour. And it may fairly be argued that in this supreme paradox of human action we have a moral proof of the probational character of human life as we know it, and a moral pledge of complete attainment in another mode of existence. If our highest mode of existence here lies in a gradual approximation towards what is essentially unattainable here, then either human life is a completer fraud than we should care to acknowledge, or attainment will be possible under other conditions of life thereafter. We can be content to "follow the gleam" and catch the echoes of eternity

in our present life, if its full glory and significance will be our portion in heaven ; otherwise our life will have been a baffled struggle and an unintelligible enigma from beginning to end. But if eternal life cannot be complete in us, in what does it consist for us ? and what right have we to claim it at all ? The answer is, that it consists in the link which we have with God through His indwelling presence in us even now ; and though the fullness of life, in which truth and goodness and beauty are completely apprehended in their complete interconnexion, is not for us on earth, yet our link with God, by whom it is perfectly possessed, gives a real stamp of eternity to our lives. Our link with God is in fact a bridge between eternity and time ; between the sphere in which all the values of life are concentrated to a single burning point of intensest life, and the sphere in which they are partially and successively revealed in separate rays which seem to have lost their connexion with each other, together with much of their own intrinsic brightness.

If we take an abstract view, and regard time in the sharpest contrast with eternity, it will appear as sheer successiveness, as a process in which one particular follows another without any hint of mutual connectedness or of a common origin. Thus Bergson tells us that a sensation of red light, felt for a single second, involves 400 trillions of successive vibrations, which would require 25,000 years in order to be experienced separately, and that they are translated into perception by the synthesizing and uniting work of memory.¹ The slackness and discontinuity of pure succession are tightened and strung up into the connected unity of thought. All life, even

¹ *Matière et Mémoire*, p. 229.

animal life, exercises something of this tightening function ; its completion—that is, a tension in which all scattered facts are gathered under a single law, and all rays of light concentrated in a single point—would be eternal life in its perfection. Ordinary human life is raised, by its possession of reason, far above the sphere of pure time ; spiritual life, indwelt by God, is far on its way to eternity. The indwelling life of God is a principle of unity ; it opens the ears of the soul to catch the one rhythm which throbs through the universe ; it opens the eyes to see the universe in God, and “ God in a point.”

But then spiritual perceptions fluctuate, and come and go, and are themselves part of the passing stream ; the body has its function in all perception, and the body itself dwells in the sphere of flux and succession. The insight fails, the brightness fades, and we are oppressed with “ the heavy and the weary weight of all this unintelligible world.” But what survives in these hours of darkness is the fact of *life*, spiritual life, personal life rooted in God. This life is, as we have seen, something more than reason or will or affection ; they are aspects or manifestations of it, and when they are blurred or obscured, the life itself is still working, blindly perhaps, and without consciousness of love or energy, but still working, or rather resting in God who is its source.

Eternal life in us, then, is the life of God communicated to us through a medium of change and becoming. One moment follows another in the flux of change ; and the succession of such moments is itself a mere illustration of the slackness and discontinuity of time. Their successiveness is the very antithesis of eternity ; and as these passing moments make up our

earthly life, what room is there in it for God's indwelling? The answer is that, in Christ, God has entered the whirl. The Incarnation means that the whole material time-process was taken up into eternity; and now, for those in whom Christ lives, each pulse of time is transfigured with eternal light, is a manifestation of eternal life. The very flux and discontinuity of our perishing life throws us back on Christ; its eternity lies, not in our efforts or reasonings, which are all in flux, but in Christ the eternal Word. Eternal life does not consist in speculations about eternity, nor in poetical reverie or philosophical abstraction, nor in stereotyped habits of thought and action—which are in the stream and cannot stem it; eternal life is the Eternal living in us. And if we are wise, we shall dispense with spurious eternities of human contrivance, and rest solely on the eternity of *God in us*. God is the permanent, static element; we, apart from Him, are in the flux of becoming; our eternal life is our recognition of each moment as a manifestation of His eternal will. Habit, custom, convention, either in thought or action, cease to satisfy; there is no rest in them; they congeal and harden and stiffen, until their sham immobility becomes intolerable, and they are swept away in the stream to which they belong. Instead, then, of advertising our jerry-built “mansions,” and crying “Rest, Rest,” when there is no rest, we shall do well frankly to recognize change and flux in all the works of nature and man, and to find rest in God from whom the stream issues, who is the reality which it reflects, and the guide who directs its course.

So, then, eternal life, as we know it, is a life of incessant change, directed by the presence and the

will of God ; and here we have the secret of true originality and progress. Good habits are formed, only to be transcended and left behind under fresh indications of God's will, fresh revelations of His presence ; it will be the same with ideals of truth and perfection ; old examples, too, will be studied just as jumping-off places for new achievements ; old explorations of the spiritual world will be a stimulus to fresh adventures and discoveries ; the interaction between a changing world and an unchanging God must, and ought to, result in fresh manifestations of spiritual life and energy. " O Love too little known ! " says Caussade. " Men think Thy marvels are o'er, and that we have but to copy Thy ancient works and quote Thy former teachings. And they see not that Thy inexhaustible action is an infinite source of new thoughts, new sufferings, new works, new Patriarchs, new Prophets, new Apostles, new Saints, who have no need to copy the life or writings one of the other, but only to live in perpetual self-abandonment to Thy secret operations. We are wont to quote the ' first ages of the Church, the times of the Saints ! ' But is not all time the effect of the divine action, the workings of the divine will, which absorbs all moments, fills them, sanctifies them, supernaturalizes them ? Has there ever been a method of self-abandonment to the divine will which is not now practicable ? From the earliest ages had the Saints other secrets of holiness than that of becoming from moment to moment what the divine action would make them ? And will not this action even to the end of time continue to pour its grace upon those who abandon themselves to it without reserve ? . . . Will of my God, Thou art my book, my doctrine, my science ; in Thee are my thoughts,

my words, my deeds, my crosses. Not by consulting Thy other works can I become what Thou wouldst make me, but only by receiving Thee through all things in that one royal way of self-abandonment to Thy will—that ancient way, that way of my fathers.”¹

It is submission to God’s will that secures originality and life. Our own circumstances are different from those of people in the past; if we allow God’s will to play upon them freely, the outcome in the way of thought and action will be different too. We become conventional just because we copy stupidly the outward behaviour of other people under other conditions of time or place or estate, not recognizing that God’s will demands a different response from each one of such differences of condition. Once again, we build our spurious eternities out of elements which have no stability or identity about them; and grow stiff and cramped and rigid in character, losing the springtide freshness which comes from waiting upon Him who is ever making all things new.

So, then, “let the great world spin for ever down the ringing grooves of change”; God endures, and the very flux of change becomes a rhythmical song of praise to Him, a progressive revelation of His will, an unfettered alertness of human obedience and response.

2

We have considered what seem to be the main characteristics of spiritual life; the *dependence*, by which the soul “thirsts” for God, “longs after” Him, and “hangs upon” Him as the Supreme Reality; the *concrete unity* which results from a balance and

¹ *Abandonment*, p. 100.

co-ordination of all human capacities ; the *self-discipline* or mortification, which subdues body to soul and soul to God ; the *successiveness*, which limits and moulds our apprehension of God's eternity. And the upshot of such considerations is, that we come back to the cult of the passing moment as a supremely important channel by which to approach God, and thereby to express and develop the spiritual life.

It ought hardly to be necessary to add that this cult is not suggested in an anarchical spirit. It does not mean that we are to abandon suddenly our good habits, forswear our good resolutions, renounce our religious beliefs, and be carried about by every wind of doctrine or vain deceit. What it does mean is, that good habits and resolutions will become better, and religious beliefs be held with more vital conviction, if we regard God as the source from which they issue, and are content to wait quietly on Him who is ever issuing His orders in fresh forms, the freshness of which is the outcome of His unchanging will acting upon a world of change. In the Psalmist's words, He is at once "our strong rock and house of defence" in His own eternity, and a guide to our steps along the path of time : "Thou art my strong rock and my castle ; be Thou also my guide, and lead me for Thy name's sake." ¹

And it must be noticed, further, that this indwelling of Christ is not the domination of an unknown and capricious force ; He who reveals Himself now from moment to moment is the same who stands revealed in the Gospel story ; there is continuity throughout ; under our changed conditions of to-day we recognize the voice which spoke by the lake or on the mountain ;

¹ Psalm xxxi. 3.

it is the same Christ whose character and will we already know, that is leading us now into fresh apprehensions of Himself and is with us even to the end of the world.

And if it is still objected that we want something more than this moment-to-moment reliance upon God, that we want to see our way in advance, that we want big visions and wide horizons, we shall do well to remember that we shall be best able to avoid mirages and attain *true* visions if we have a reasonable confidence that the particular step we are taking is in accordance with God's will. Then, as step follows step, the path defines itself, the plan unfolds, the vision dawns ; and it is the vision of God's will.

To *do the next thing*, under God's direction, that is the secret of insight as well as of contentedness. It means, undoubtedly, that we are always being interrupted and thwarted in the execution of our own schemes and theories, and this seems at first to make life chaotic and incoherent. But then out of that very shock and clash of calls and duties, in which God's will is manifested, there emerges something else ; something that is not intellectual culture nor practical success, but a new thing which partakes of each and transcends them both, because it lies at the Source from which both issue ;—a new thing which is a character, a life, a spiritual life, the life of God within us, and therefore invested with an eternity and completeness which can never belong to the efforts of our own mind in knowledge or in practice. Those efforts may be painfully disturbed and interrupted by our obedience to the will of God, but then these efforts are themselves essentially fragmentary and inchoate, whereas the new life which is taking shape is eternal and peaceful and complete. If we give up our own

schemes to follow God's prompting, we gain far more than we forfeit ; we save our life by losing it. And after all, the biggest of all possible views, and the largest of all horizons, is the consciousness of Christ's presence in the soul, the sense of His guidance in the carrying out of His mighty will. From obedience will come insight, insight into ideals of beauty and truth and goodness, which our own minds could never have imagined, and yet which are in a sense already ours because they belong to the life of God.

Such, then, is the cult of the passing moment. It is the offering of our whole nature, co-ordinated in its parts and disciplined in its temper, to the supreme Reality of the universe, who dwells in us through sacramental rites, reveals Himself to us through our meditations on His presence, claims our ready and untrammelled obedience from point to point in the race of life, and manifests Himself afresh through every shock of change in an incessantly changing world.

It is the cult of eternal life ; it is rooted in Christ, in whom eternity and time are united, Christ who from moment to moment purifies our desires, illuminates our minds, and works our works in us ; Christ whose indwelling presence is the clearness of vision by which we apprehend His will, the devotion with which we love it, and the strength by which we carry it to good effect.

So, then, we have our place in the transitory, striving, agonizing world ; we do our bit of work, and pass, and are forgotten. But the Eternal, who has passed through that world Himself, is in us ; and by receiving each moment as from Him, and offering each to His

service, we shall find that a Life and a Character are being wrought in us, a spiritual Character and an eternal Life, which grow stronger and clearer till at last they become the one reality of our existence, reflecting the supreme reality of God. If in God, and God alone, we seek stability and rest, we shall find them there, and have them for ever.

O send out Thy light and Thy truth, that they may lead me : and bring me to Thy holy hill and to Thy dwelling.

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